

Homegroan girls: a visual investigation into the bad girl stereotype within popular soft porn website culture.

By

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Abstract

This project aimed to develop a visual language to explore the phenomena of the *bad girl* stereotype in popular culture. The term bad girl reflects a change in contemporary attitudes towards gender roles and identity. Women of all ages are taking control of their own sexual image through examination, and subversion, of concepts that carried negative connotations in a patriarchal society. In particular this project focuses on the use and effects of digital technology and how this has enabled women to participate in a revision of established notions of gender roles in contemporary society.

Through devices like digital photography, home computers and Internet access, women can explore, deconstruct and play with their own 'image'. This marks a significant change in the history of the 'pin up girl' and the influence and domination of the male gaze on the female sexual aesthetic. Previously guys would send photos of their girlfriends into trashy magazines like *Picture*. But now in their own surroundings ordinary girls are both posing for the camera and taking the photographs. This self-exploration and reclaiming of sexuality is even more prominent on the Internet with websites like suicidegirls.com and digitalgirly.com.

The project has strong links, both formally and culturally, to pop artists Andy Warhol and Allen Jones, photographers such as Nan Goldin, (whose work recorded the true-life adventures of her mates 'living on the edge') and contemporary artists Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas. These artists transgressive use of smutty tabloid humour and investigations into female stereotypes play a vital role in the construction of this project.

The works evolve from digital photographs and footage taken during photo shoots with girlfriends being 'bad' around the house. Bad girls acting out their web porn fantasies are depicted within everyday domestic surroundings. The three stages of the research have all involved an exploration in collage techniques. The project is a hybrid of old and new techniques including painting, drawing, photography, animation and web design, enabling the outcomes to weave in and out of the public digital arena and the more conventional gallery space. The results of my investigation are represented by a series of digital and vinyl cut out works, animations, digital prints and the homegroan girls website.

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This MFA project is dedicated to Rose Tenace 28.12.69 – 30.04.03

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Part One: What the investigation set out to achieve

Introduction

Leading up to Masters; my Honours project

During my Honours project I became interested in identifying and articulating my concerns about female sexual stereotypes within popular culture. The body of work I developed in that year dealt specifically with female stereotypes within cyber culture. It was close to the new millennium, and movies being released like *eXistenZ* (David Cronenberg, 1999) explored contemporary society's interest in and exploration of cyber culture through its specific focus on the sexuality embedded in game culture. Movies like *eXistenZ* and *Run Lola Run*, popular game advertising and Playstation games (including equipment) all played an important role in my investigation into identifying female sexual stereotypes within cyber culture.

My Honours project title was *game girls* and was made up of a series of paintings using high gloss enamel paint on aluminium. The paintings were based on photographs I had taken of girlfriends being sexually suggestive, playing with joysticks and other computer game equipment, or acting out the various commands within game play. An example from the game girl series is *she scores* a diptych of a girl lying back on a couch with her bare legs spread, a fluffy coat wrapped over her body. She is wearing the popular raver type hair-band with stars, and looking at the viewer with her mouth covered with a 'hotspot'. An arrow and her hand are pointing towards the hotspot suggesting 'click here and score!'



figure 1: *she scores* 2001

The photographs, taken of friends, were traced with pen and then scanned into Photoshop (an image manipulation computer program). The outlines of the figure were then blocked in with flat colour and cropped or blown up to create the desired composition. The image was printed onto acetate and then projected and traced onto aluminium and filled in with enamel paint. The look of the work was inspired by the illustrative style of computer games, animations on websites and other contemporary screen based imagery. An example of the particular 'vector' style of illustration that informed my project is the work of Jasper Goodall, a British designer who uses hand-drawn outlines and bright pop colours.



figure 2: Jasper Goodall
back cover of free art zine,
The Face, no 88, May
2004

The process of taking photographs, tracing with pen, scanning, using the computer program 'Photoshop' and an overhead projector all played a central role in the construction of *game girls*. At that time I also began experimenting with animation of my 2D works, using programs like Director. These image-making techniques formed the basis for the formal elements of my Masters project.

The other important element that developed during my Honours year was the growing interest I had in popular culture and identifying types of female sexual stereotypes within this field. I found it interesting in the computer game world that the computer 3D modelled chicks had exaggerated sexual

body parts, pretty faces, hot clothing alongside a 'killer' attitude. Not only was it possible to obtain digital sexual titillation, but also it could blow your brains out, literally. The common feature to all these chicks was the array of weaponry they slung around their computer generated womanly hips. You could compare these digital girls to the science fiction warrior girls decked out in fur bikinis, airbrushed on the numerous panel vans in the late 1980s; the images that I saw growing up in the western suburbs of Sydney.



figure 3: Frank Frazetta
New world, 1980

Like most teenagers in the 1980s, my room was covered with pin-up posters collected from teen music magazines. The one that I remember best was of Madonna, playing the 'local tart'. The poster was a close-up of her face, sporting heavy black eye liner. Wrapped around her chipped nail polished fingers was a piece of chain pulled tight across her parted lips.

Madonna celebrated the body, an excessive body, and deliberately emphasized the lower strata of the body. She enacted parodic and exaggerated performances of femininity and heterogeneously combined the virgin and whore, little girl playing dress up and seasoned gold digger.¹

The quote above sums up the transgressive way that Madonna presented a new take on female sexuality into the popular media, one that played with

¹ Schulze, L, Barton White, A and Brown, J D, 'A sacred monster in Her Prime': Audience Construction of Madonna as Low-Other' in Schwichtenberg, C, *The Madonna connection*. St Leonard, Allen & Unwin, 1993, p 24

the apparent cultural constraints placed upon women. But like most teenage girls in the 80s, I wasn't even aware of the word 'transgressive'. Madonna appealed to my friends and I because she toyed around with men and had fun playing the bad girl. We all ran out and bought those black plastic bangles that Madonna wore, and we dreamed of our lives as young women, dressing up, going to nightclubs, drinking, acting up and using smutty humour.



figure 4: Madonna in the 80s

Bad girls

Bad girls have been around since the beginning of time, we know this because over the years these wild, dangerous and provocative women have been staring back at us from all those musty paintings, sketches, faded photographs and magazines. However I am only interested in the development of the 'bad girl' from the 1980s onward within the context of my research. The portrayal of women's sexuality has a long and complex history and has generally been displayed in the shadow of patriarchal society, which has dictated culture. The relationship between sex and power has had a strong impact on visual representation throughout history. Women, as less empowered members of the community have suffered a censorship of true expression because of this. Religious teaching has also had a major effect on deciding what is allowable and open for discussion in society. Again this had led to a repression of sexual expression particularly for women.

Catherine Lumby points out in her book *Bad Girls*

Exactly what do real images of women's sexuality look like? To turn the problem around, sexuality may not be an area which is all that amenable to reality in the first place. If anything, it's a zone infused by the constant desire to reinvent ourselves and others.²

In the 21st century 'bad girls' has become a term to describe feisty feminist women artists, who explore women's sexuality. It has also become a sexual cliché, widely understood and used in popular culture by female celebrities through to teenage girls at the local mall wearing t-shirts with printed slogans like 'good girls go to heaven and bad girls go everywhere!'.

Within popular culture, young girls acting rude and crude is not a new concept as Angela McRobbie identifies in her research into the culture of girlie magazines of the 90s. McRobbie writes that young women:

...[h]ave to develop their own language for dealing with sexual inequality, and if they do this through a raunchy language of 'shagging, snogging and having a good time', then perhaps the role these plays is not unlike the sexually explicit manifestoes found in the early writing of figures like Germaine Greer and Sheila Rowbottom. The key difference is that this language is now found in the mainstream of commercial culture; not out there in the margins of the 'political underground'.³

Hey bad girl, I see you; the beginnings of my Masters project

At the initial stages of my Masters' candidature I had some loosely shaped areas of interest that I wanted to develop through the research I had carried out in my Honours project. I was still very much interested in female stereotypes and began to consider the role of the bad girl role in contemporary culture. The ideal starting point for me was to revisit the

² Lumby, C *Bad girls: TV, sex and feminism in the 90's*, St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1997, p 21

³ McRobbie, A *In the culture society: Art, fashion and popular music*. London, Routledge, 1999, p126

exhibition catalogue *Bad girls* organized by Marcia Tucker for the Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1994. The catalogue gave a concise history of the term 'bad girls' and also gave information on artists dealing with sexual stereotypes in a transgressive manner. It was an opportunity to cast my net broadly and gather information on some of the artists taking part in the 'bad girl' show. I also began research into both feminist cultural theory and pro-sex feminist theory, with particular reference to popular culture and identities, like Madonna, who used female sexual stereotypes for her own purposes. People like Madonna and the bad girl artists, Annie Sprinkle and Sue Williams, paved the way for a new generation of bad girls, who are not only artists and musicians but also ordinary girls. These girls embrace the bad girl stereotype within everyday life, dressing up, starting a band or taking photographs in the confines of their bedrooms.

The Subject Matter

In this section I want to discuss my interest in the popularity of the bad girl in contemporary culture and why I have chosen this topic for my research.

I then introduce the first stage of my MFA project ***trash team racing***, which was informed by the popular bad girl. I want to establish the connections I have made between the ordinary bad girl and the girls I found featured on popular porn sites located on the World Wide Web. I believe the girls who post photos of themselves acting 'bad' on the Internet are a new breed of bad girl. Subsequently I introduce and consider the second stage of my research ***half and half***. I discuss the way the work was made and its importance, as it marks the first works in which I began to consider the use of the source photograph in the finished piece. I go on to examine how these everyday bad girls on the web contribute to the evolution of a new imagery of female sexuality. It is this new type of female sexuality on the web that has informed the third stage ***homegroan girls***. Within the final body of work I would like to introduce the exploration of media involved and discuss the type of practice within my MFA.

The popular bad girl in contemporary culture

The bad girl stereotype has hit the mainstream in contemporary culture; with pop cultural icons like Kylie Minogue and Courtney Love exploiting the persona Madonna embarked on during the 1980's. In 2005, flipping through magazines like *Who* and *New Idea* we can see the bad girl in the likes of America's richest party girl, Paris Hilton, and Jordan the British tabloid star, who are both famous for not much more than getting their boobs out and hamming it up for the cameras.

Both Paris and Jordan are the new breed of 'bad girl' celebrity who have obviously been instructed in 'wild party girl' etiquette that employs the guise of soft porn when hamming it up for the media. A perfect example of this new popular bad girl is a photo of Jordan I ripped out of *New Idea*, at the local fish and chip shop. It's not dissimilar to a front cover image of the

'smutty' *Picture* magazine. It's a photo essay titled 'when I grow up I want to be...' featuring photos of Jordan, ranging from cutesy baby, school photo, together with childhood sweetheart and recent shots. The visual punch line is the 'now' photo, featuring Jordan flashing her 'well formed' boobs at a party with the words 'too rude' stamped over her nipples.



figure 5: Paris Hilton



figure 6: Jordan

Being a bad girl no longer means shocking because it has become a popular 'attitude' and a confident stance. It allows women to get a kick out of exploring pin up and soft porn semblance, crude honesty and humour. Pop musicians like Madonna and Peaches have fuelled a way for ordinary girls to take the power of sexual stereotypes into their own hands and be self-indulgent when playing with the boundaries of the sexualised image.

There are women out there who are not only acting the bad girl, but also messing with the stereotype itself, twisting and weaving through the bad girl code of behaviour and looks. Performance artist/musician Peaches, is often decked out in short shorts, fishnet stockings and stilettos. Her website features a page dedicated to close-up photos of her hairy crotch taken by members of her audience. Peaches' lyrics 'are about getting dumped, getting drunk, getting a root, being a smart arse and dancing at gay night

clubs till 3 in the morning.⁴ I'm sure many women can relate to Peaches' lyrics about drunk chicks out for a night on the town who 'flirt with anyone and everyone, flash their tits and kiss each other'.⁵ Peaches draws attention to female sexual stereotypes; she says that '[the objectification of women] is now a powerful thing'.⁶ I have decided to remain outside ideas of the bad girl artist (feminist) dealing with sexuality and 'addressing life-altering or deeply disturbing issues'⁷ and to pursue my interest in exploring the popular meaning of the idiom 'bad girl' in the context of popular culture and the internet in everyday life.



figure 7: Peaches website

The Work

The first body of work within my MFA project is *trash team racing*. The work in *trash team racing* featured photographs taken of my girlfriends, getting ready to go out, drinking at the pub, flashing their tits and arses. The works took the form of digital prints of trashy photographs, drawings from photographs, larger than life projections, and proposed wall paintings.

In the title **trash** for me means getting pissed, being provocative and having fun; **team** suggests a group of mates and **racing** means running around nightclubs late at night. Some of the works were more successful than

⁴ Harper, A, 'The teaches of Peaches', *Togatus* issue 7, 2003, p 39

⁵ Harper, A,

⁶ Levin, D, 'The teaches of Peaches' *Yen*, issue 9: Feb/March. 2004, p 44

⁷ Pollack, B, 'Babe power' *Art Monthly (UK)*, no.235, April, 2000, p 10

others in the initial stage of my MFA. However it was then I began to consider the role of the bad girl in contemporary culture.

A new breed of bad girl / popular soft porn on the Internet

While doing some web surfing during the first stage of my MFA candidature, I hit a website called bikinibandits.com. As the name suggests, it features photographs of bikini-clad chicks, posing with machine guns and hotted up cars. I liked the photos; I've always had a thing for chicks with guns wearing high heels. Anyhow while checking out the site on a regular basis a new page appeared titled 'amateur bandit gallery'. It was a page where ordinary girls could post photos of themselves posing as bikini bandits. This page struck a chord. The 'homemade' bikini bandits were not professional models groomed to the upmost level, but everyday girls running around the house in a bikini, or like one of my favourite photos; a chick hanging out on her boyfriend's crap speedboat, flashing her boobs.

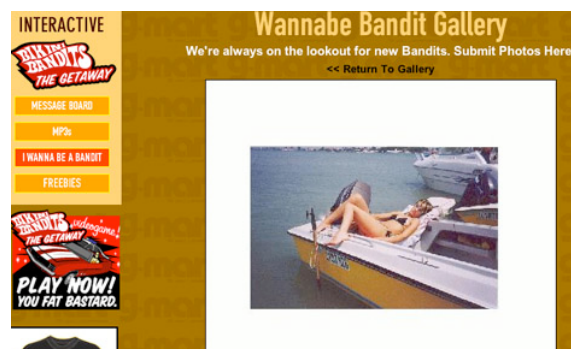


figure 8: bikini bandits website

There's a degree of humour in the photos of the amateur bikini bandits; the chicks aren't taking themselves too seriously; it is just a bit of sexy fun. I also found the snapshot aesthetic style of photography used in the images interesting, for the bad composition and the incidental background information captured, like the décor in the house. The photographers were amateurs, most likely using a cheap digital camera and the models were probably their girlfriends. This sort of photography is not new; loads of boyfriends have convinced their girlfriends to 'show us your tits' for the camera. All you have to do is think back to the late 1980s and your uncle's

collection of magazines like *Picture* in the corner of the loo at home. Sitting on the toilet you could check out all the guys' girlfriends posing on the beach with their pants down, nude in the shower or on the couch with bra off. The provocative but droll interviews with the girls featured in the photographs informed readers what their favourite sexual position was or the spot to 'do it' in.

In the late 90s things changed in the world of amateur porn photography. A friend of mine answered a newspaper ad from a female professional photographer, who took soft porn photos of her in the backyard. When and if the photos got published in *Picture* magazine my friend would get a cut of the photographer's fee. She got the fee, it went towards TAFE textbooks, but the particular photos of my friend didn't get published for months and months after the photo shoot. What is now new is the ease and quickness with which somebody can inject themselves into popular culture, simply by posting photographs of themselves playing the bad girl on a website. The scope of this 'expression' goes beyond the normal audience of the magazine and becomes globally accessible thanks to contemporary technology.

As Barbara Creed said in the introduction to her book *Media Matrix*

The virtual media of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries (the Internet, email, websites, virtual reality) are characterised by the post modern impulse to play with reality, obliterate time and distance, cross borders, destabilise notions of a fixed personal identity and immerse oneself in the activity of becoming other.⁸

Fantasizing or playacting plays an important role in the make up of these bad girls of the web. The girls that had posted photos of themselves acting as 'bikini bandits' on the website of the same name intrigued me; noticeable in the photographs along side the debris of everyday life was the desire to fantasize and visually articulate the 'bad girl'.

⁸ Creed, B, *Media Matrix: sexing the new reality*, Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, 2003, p 2

My interest gravitated specifically towards the bad girl within soft porn web culture of the 21st century, such as the girls on the 'amateur bandit gallery'. I decided the ordinary bad girl on the web was a worthy subject to explore by candidly taking photographs and video footage of my girlfriends acting bad around the house. It was an opportunity to capture how contemporary women enjoy and play with the 'bad girl' sexual stereotype using modern technologies. Of interest is how ordinary girls, together with the tabloid stars, are now smudging the margins between our personal and public lives, with the aid of readily available technologies like the digital camera and computer. I put forward as my argument that there is a new breed of 'bad girl' who is ordinary, and takes advantage of accessible technologies to promote and enjoy her own 'image'.

half and half is the second stage of my MFA and I consider it is important to the development of the look of my project. The works are digital prints that are made up of two layers, the bottom layer is a source photograph, the top layer is a painting designed on the same image. I rubbed out some of the top layer to reveal the original source photograph of my friend. This type of collage technique allowed for some of the dodgy surroundings of rental accommodation, within the photograph, to peep through (like milk crates used as furniture, dirty carpet, second hand couches). I found this an important feature because it broke up the slick, flat colour enamel paint vector type of design* that I had previously been using. Retaining some of the original photograph in the images allowed me to talk about my growing interest in the source photograph.

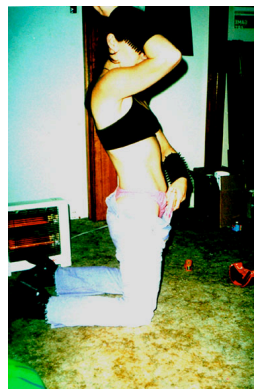
figure 9: *miss fire*

figure 10: source photograph



figure 11: photograph & design

* Think Apples iPod advertisements

Badgirl.com - evolution of a new imagery of female sexuality

Another web site I consider important to the development of the new bad girl is digitalgirly.com. It's a web site featuring digital photographs and video taken by a Natasha Merritt of her sexual exploits. Merritt utilizes the idea of the slut; she has masses of sexual encounters and has hundreds and hundreds of photos to demonstrate them. A bad girl that takes pleasure in documenting her everyday sexual adventures with little more than a digital camera and computer.

Merritt herself has said in her diary

I feel like I accomplished quite a lot today. Made it to the tanning salon to get my nails done. Reinstalled my system software and edited some pics. Pinned 20 prints on the wall. Good sex was the ultimate achievement.⁹

Humorously, the quote above from Merritt's diary sums up the contemporary bad girl. Similar comments can be overheard in a coffee shop or bar and may well reflect some of the aspects of a typical day in the life of any ordinary woman.

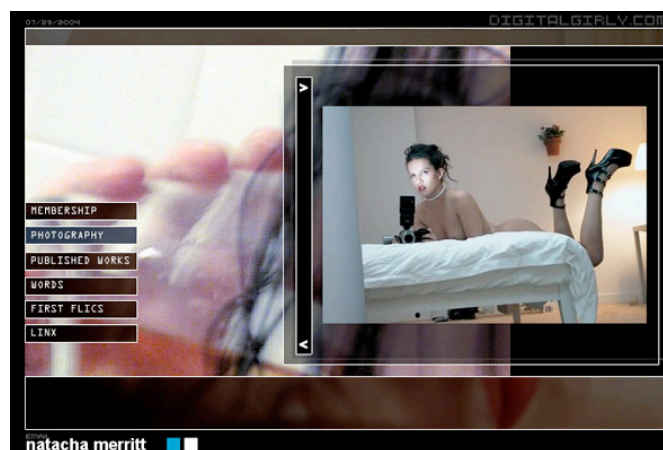


figure 12: digitalgirly.com

⁹ Merritt, N, *Digital Diaries*, Koln, Taschen, 2000, p 084

Merritt's book of the same title as her website *Digital Diaries* has an interview conducted by Eric Kroll, (well known fetish photographer) where both Merritt and Kroll discuss sex, photography and the fact that Merritt is not professionally trained and how digital photography is easy and fast. The director of the Australian Centre of Photography, Alasdair Foster, has said

The current fashion for low-res, apparently amateurish pornography is an extension of the reality TV mode in which we don't aspire to the exceptional but rather scrutinize the minutiae of other unremittingly ordinary lives with which to favourably compare our own.¹⁰

Digital images have particular abilities that can be exploited to emphasize the 'heat' of the moment. Some of those abilities are the odd camera angles that can be explored at no cost; you are not wasting film, if an image doesn't work you just press the delete button. This freedom allows for a refreshing cheekiness and, with the advent of in-built cameras in mobile phones, you are able to snap some very uninhibited moments in life. In the middle of 2004, a young Australian female high school student was suspended 'after appearing in uniform in sexually suggestive photographs posted on the web'.¹¹ As Susan Hopkins explains; 'being busted for provocative poses in uniform is one curious effect of the worlds new communication tools; becoming an overnight net celebrity is another'.¹²



figure 13: Internet image of school girl

¹⁰ Grace, H, 'Pornography and photography, Helen Grace interviews Alasdair Foster', *Artlink*, vol 24, no 2, 2004, p 48

¹¹ Hopkins, S, 'Morality exhibition' *The Bulletin*, July 20, 2004, p 14

¹² Hopkins, S, p 14

Ordinary bad girls becoming celebrities on the Internet is something the girls appearing on suicidegirls.com know all about. The website features punky girls posing provocatively covered in tattoos, body piercing and wild hair. A fellow named Sean Suhl (known as Spooky) and a woman called Missy in Portland America created the site in 2001. 'Both have backgrounds in web design and programming, and started the site almost as a hobby.'¹³ Sean said 'I know how to build online communities and Missy was always obsessed with pin-up photography'.¹⁴

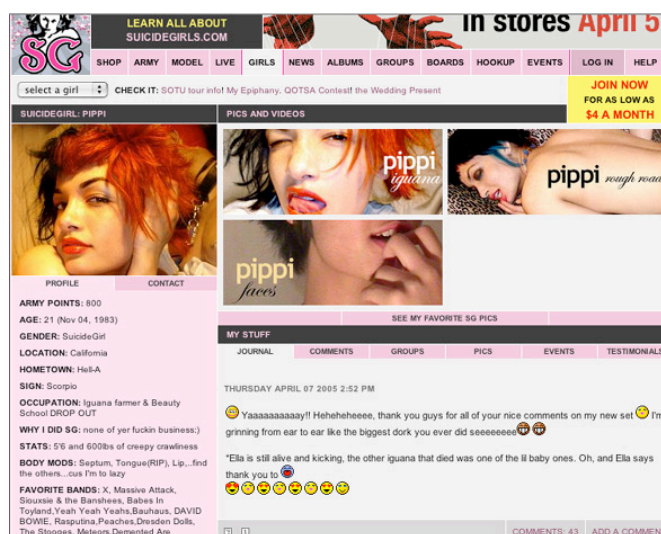


figure 14: suicidegirls.com

It is Missy's obsession with pin-up photography that informs the site's content. Missy is the main photographer for the website and, as she said in the interview for *Black and White* magazine, the girls she photographs 'design their own photo shots and are shown in the ways they want to be shown. They're not forced into any submissive poses. They're being sexy and enjoying themselves.'¹⁵

Looking at the photographs on the website you can pick Missy's pin-up photography influences from photographers like the toe and stocking fetish

¹³ Gaynor, J, 'Suicidegirls.com, a grrrl-empowered playboy for the post-punk generation', *Black & White*, issue 70, Jan, 2004, p 34

¹⁴ Gaynor, J, p 34

¹⁵ Gaynor, J, p 36

Elmer Batters and Eric Kroll, who is famous for his images of women in bondage outfits.

The suicide girls website is an archive of soft porn photographs, mostly taken by Missy or taken by the suicide girls themselves, girls from all around the world contribute. Currently there are 237 suicide girls featured on the website and the girls are understandably not in it for the money, 'each photo shoot is worth 200 US dollars'.¹⁶

'Guests to the website can see much of the site for free, but to view the entire archive of 12,755 pictures they have to pony up \$4 US dollars a month.'¹⁷ A big part of the makeup of the site is the online community vibe you get when visiting, you can check out what suicide girls have to say on a wide range of issues by viewing the online journals each girl writes. You can also read articles on bands or reviews of concerts; view music rock clips that the suicide girls feature in and check the dates for their travelling live Burlesque shows. Online you can buy suicide girl stickers, key rings and undies that feature their popular logo. You can also purchase a coffee table book that replicates the website, featuring all the popular shots of the suicide girls, with a blurb about each girl at the back of the book similar to the online journal featured on the website.



figure 15: book cover



figure 16: page from book

¹⁶ Roe, A, 'The calculated assault of suicidegirls.com' viewed 13 Jan, 2005
<http://www.wwweek.com/print.php?story=3716>

¹⁷ Roe, A,

In the interview in *Black and White* magazine, Spooky said 'membership is about 50/50 between male and female'.¹⁸ A figure that is quite remarkable in the soft porn Internet industry where 55 percent of the paying members are female. Also they receive 'about 200 applications a week from wannabe models from all over the world'.¹⁹ A reason for the popularity of the Suicide girls web site is that it features ordinary girls, albeit ones that are covered in tattoos and body piercing. The suicide girls are the everyday chicks you check out at the local clubs and bars. These girls are comfortable in taking their clothes off and appropriating the 'bad girl' role for their own enjoyment. As Kath Albury has suggested:

...[t]he Internet has not simply brought porn into the home, but has in fact facilitated a kind of 'domestication' of pornography, by allowing porn fans to become amateur pornographers in their own bedrooms. Most importantly, it allows those who feel left out of the mainstream explicit and non-explicit media representations of sexiness and sexuality to create the kind of porn they want to see.²⁰

Websites like suicide girls, featuring digital photos of ordinary girls being sexy around the house fed into the final stage *homegroan girls* I developed for my MFA project. It was in these works where I began to develop a type of imagery that collaged together the source photograph of my friends and the popular porn aesthetic. This incorporates the approach taken by the bad girls, posting photos of themselves on the web. Of interest was how the girls explore the repertoire of soft porn poses; push your tits together, arse in the air or lick your lipstick lips provocatively. Within this group of works I had decided to move away from using solid flat areas of colour and to emphasize the provocative nature of the photographs. These images drew from soft porn, using props like milk, in the works of *dribble girl*

¹⁸ Gaynor, J, 'Suicidegirls.com, a grrrl-empowered playboy for the post-punk generation', *Black & White*, issue 70, Jan, 2004, p

¹⁹ Roe, A,

²⁰ Albury, K, 'The ethics of porn on the net' in LUNBY, C, PROBYN, E, *Remote control: New media, new ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p 197

in lounge room. It also became important to use titles that imply the nature of the photo shoot where the images had been taken, like the series of works in *night the cops turned up*, *tues night band practice* and *relaxing after a hard nights work*.

Researching further soft porn sites on the web was an important aspect of my MFA project, and essential to the development of my own website. To do this I completed a 2D animation unit that allowed me to understand the computer software that would allow me to animate my 2D imagery and shift into moving image work. This course led to the completion of a web design unit, that enabled me to construct and design my own website, that could act as a platform for my animations alongside the 2D work. The website features a logo created from the title of my MFA, to suggest a branding approach vital to my **homegroan girls**. The site features a map type page, of my house and rooms where the photo shoots took place. When you run your mouse over the room, the hotspot is activated and a drop down menu appears. The viewer can check out series of photographs, short animations or digital images, specific to each room.



figure 17: homegroangirls.com

What This Project Is Not About

In the 21st century, photos of ordinary chicks behaving badly have become a huge phenomenon on the Internet, enjoyed by both women and men. My MFA project is immersed in the popular web form of the ordinary bad girl, which I find is an interesting and important development in the chronicles of the bad girl. My project is not an historical exploration of the bad girl; rather it comes from my personal experience and interest. Growing up as a teenager in the 1980s and being a young fan of Madonna and Debbie Harry has fuelled my current interest in the new breed of bad girl who make popular soft porn for the Internet.

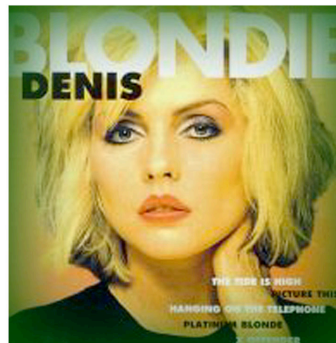


figure 18: Blondie

My project is not about making hard-core porn, but about exploring the popular porn aesthetic. Especially relevant to my project is how ordinary women discern female sexuality through exploring the bad girl stereotype in popular culture. The popular porn aesthetic can be seen in magazines like *The Face*. The featured photo spread by Terry Williams of Macaulay Culkin in the November 2002 issue is reminiscent of the life of a young gay prostitute.



figure 19: The Face, Nov, 2002

I feel that the look of the edgy lifestyle that is featured in magazines like *The Face* is critical to my project. The bad girl in popular culture is now more about a bad arse attitude and exploiting the look of porn. The fundamental difference in the construction of the images is the projection of sexuality from within the subject, even when this uses (and subverts) prescribed ideas and images from the outside; as opposed to something that is projected upon from the outside (patriarchal) world.

My project is not about feminism, though I would like to acknowledge the importance of feminist writers and artists to the development of my research. I wish to recognize the muscle and insight I have gained through reading the thoughts of people like Catherine Lumby and Kath Aulbury. These writers have enabled me to grasp the feminist debates on porn, female sexuality and the media of the early 70s through to the 21st century. Writers like Catherine Lumby have made it possible for artists like myself to explore and ask questions about female sexuality while surfing the World Wide Web. Feminist strategies of irony, subversion and rebellion play a critical role alongside popular culture in the construction of my MFA project. Lumby wrote that:

...[a] viable feminist approach to media images needs to recognise, develop and enhance women's abilities to negotiate images. Which surely must begin, not with a campaign to reinforce the ideas that images are demeaning and degrading to women, but with a campaign to show what the diversity of women can, and regularly do, make of images and themselves.²¹

I have chosen to place my project in context with artists who have explored the sexualities of their times like Andy Warhol, Nan Goldin and Australian artist Lee-Ann Richards, whose large format photographs of people's

²¹ Lumby, C, *Bad girls: TV, sex and feminism in the 90's*, St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1997, p 25

arsholes offer 'the artistic possibilities of personal identity realised through sexual fetish, kink and participation'.²²



figure 20: Lee-Ann Richards
Roller girl
Type C print
2001

²² Spencer, M, 'Lee-Ann Richards arseholes' *Photofile*, issue 64, Dec, 2001 p 51

Conclusion

I will now give an overview that highlights the key moments in working methods that help to explain the development of my research. In the third chapter I have outlined how the project was pursued and give a more in-depth account of the methods developed in the experiments through to the completed works.

Each particular stage of my project has groups of work that demonstrate my progress and comprehension of the subject matter as well the formal qualities explored in production. Furthermore each section is made up of experiments with image-making techniques, which show a coherent progression when viewing the final works presented for examination.

The initial period is split into two stages. The first one, **trash team racing** marks the beginning of my deliberation in identifying the bad girl stereotype within popular culture. This work is made up of experiments with digital imaging, photography, slide projection and wall paintings. This was a time of dissatisfaction with re-workings of previous work methods developed in my honours year.

The second stage is called **half and half** and was significant in defining my investigation, as it brought to focus the importance of the photo shoots I organize, and the photographs I take, of the ordinary bad girl. This stage also marked a point in the development of my image making. It was the first time I layered the source photograph under the image of the paintings I had completed in the **trash team racing** stage. It was also the first time that I had combined the pop style illustration work that I had been working on previously with the actual source image. Placing the two layers in the Photoshop program enabled me to mask the top layer and use the rubber tool to rub back parts of the slick top layer to reveal the photograph. I was excited by the results that included the dodgy surroundings of rental accommodation: milk crates, crap carpet, beer bottles lying around and

photo collages on fridges. I produced 5 digital prints, using the finished painting and source photograph, which were the first experiments of the collage technique I would later take develop more fully.

The initial excitement of the collage technique dissipated after that series and I went back to working on designing paintings using enamel on aluminium. I started working on a new painting, but I wasn't feeling very confident even though it was a more complex and challenging composition. This work was never finished (I gave away the aluminium to a friend) and it was my last attempt in that working method.

The third stage of my MFA project was initially called 'home grown glamour girls', a title I felt strongly suggested my fascination in the ordinary bad girl. About one third of the way through this stage I became unhappy with the title as I felt it didn't reflect the recent connections I had made between amateur soft porn websites and the ordinary bad girl. **Homegroan girls** replaced the previous title; it reinforced my developments in visual direction and understanding gained of my subject. It was relevant to the exciting discoveries I had made about the new breed of bad girl on the Internet.

The first series of work *the night the cops turned up 1,2,3* in **homegroan girls** signifies the moment when I seriously began to consider using the collage technique I had previously explored. The works were designed in the Photoshop program using two layers and the rubbing back effect. The construction of the design involved selecting a photograph, photocopying it then scanning it. Then I traced the photocopy using a black texta and scanned it in, before working on the trace image and filled in areas with my particular pop colours. Placing the hand-drawn outline and colour layer over the photocopy I masked the top layer. I then began the rubbing back process, which added a kind of vigour to the image. I was happy with the grainy quality mixed with the hand-drawn outline and areas of pop colour. I was also pleased with the type of photographs I selected as I felt they were suggestive of the popular porno aesthetic and captured the trashy bad girl.

Roughly half way through my MFA I felt I was making headway in a direction that was new and exciting. The reasons for my previous struggles became a little clearer. I began to realize that, as the connections between the ordinary bad girl and soft porn web sites were becoming more evident in my thinking, the links also appeared in the work I was constructing for **homegroan girls**.

My biggest problem was how to get the images off the computer. I had printed them on to acetate and projected them using an overhead projector in my studio and decided that I wanted to make them larger than life. After numerous experiments with layering different combinations of materials together, I came up with a way to make the work duplicate the layering effect I achieved on the computer. This consisted of a digital print, a layer of clear polycarbonate plastic pinned over the top of it, and then a hand-cut coloured vinyl sticker placed on the polycarbonate. The sheet of plastic was perfect with its high gloss and transparent qualities that still allowed the areas of the digital photograph to appear.

Making the first series of vinyl-cut out works was an exciting time and the finished works felt like a massive leap forward in my image-making capabilities. In addition to the excitement with the digital vinyl cutout works I branched out into animation, through a 2D animation unit I completed at that time. This was important, because I became intrigued with the possibility of making short video grabs and animations. I wanted to be able to animate my **homegroan girls** and I also began to seriously consider the development of a website that could act as a platform for my animations and digital works. I eventually did a web design unit in the last phrase of my MFA and found it be the perfect opportunity to build my own digital view of my **homegroan girls**.

The struggles I had in the making of the work arose from my wanting to develop the 'look'; one that wasn't suited to the conventional types of

painting and photography; one that brought together old and new techniques from drawing to e-media. It seemed that all the time spent on the computer making potential works, now led to the development of my look. I am now proficient in a range of computer programs like Photoshop (image manipulation), After Effects (animation and editing) and Dreamweaver MX (web design). Becoming confident in using the computer has enabled me to combine and layer the elements of my practice like drawing, photography and painting. This in turn has led to the recent additions of animation and web design to my practice.

To sum up I decided to set myself the task of developing a project that employed the digital footage and photos I take of my 'bad girl' friends acting trashy in our everyday surroundings. The focus of my **homegroan girls** project is to create a series of works that employ techniques of digital photography, animation, web design along with drawing, painting and photography. These practices of contemporary digital image-making combined and woven together with drawing and painting have enabled me to develop a new type of collage, which has led to the development of my own visual language capturing the digital look and sexy lifestyle of the ordinary bad girl in the 21st century.

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Part Two: Context

Pop Art

The photograph of your 'image'

As a young woman in the early nineties, I lived in share houses in inner city Sydney. For most young kids living in the city, this can be a trashy and stimulating time, going to crazy parties in dingy warehouses and meeting the outrageous characters of the city's underbelly. During that time, I remember reading some of my flatmate's books about Warhol and 'the factory'. I enjoyed looking at the images of Warhol's posse of 'stars' posing on black couches, with the silver coated walls of the factory as a backdrop. I fell in love with the edgy and grainy black and white photographs and film stills of people like Eddie Sedgwick and Nico.



figure 21: Nat Finkelstein
Andy films Nico
Black and white photograph

My crowd of friends enjoyed life in a way I pictured might have been similar to the goings on in the factory. It was a big band of casual and intimate characters like Rose who was reminiscent of Nico, a sexy singer with a smoky voice and also Age, an artist and poet, alongside the other musos, students, artists and druggies. Warhol and his stars were part of the inspiration for our feeble version of the 'sex, drugs and roll and roll lifestyle'. At that time, I

developed my interest in drawing and taking photos of friends. I wanted to record the self-indulgent way we lived and looked. Reflecting now, it was a time that shaped the way I saw the world and Warhol's images of his stars kicked off my interest in documenting the way I saw my friends.

In the book *Pop Out Queer Warhol*, Jonathan Flatley discusses Warhol's film *Blow Job* (1963) and suggests that when filming people:

Warhol is not an outsider looking in; his look, in fact, creates the image. The performance is done with an acute awareness of and relation to being seen.²³ Flatley goes on to say 'the spectacle in Warhol's films is produced by and for the camera...As the recording apparatus mechanically transforms life into art, it constitutes the space of its attention as a theatre of self representation...'²⁴

For me, what makes Warhol's images dissimilar from say the social documentary photographers of the same era, (photographers like Diane Arbus who captured the lives of either less or more fortunate people in cities like New York), is that Warhol's photos capture the 'image' of the person.

...Warhol's Pop way of seeing enabled him to feel like an insider, to reinhabit and reinvent the image world around him. If it could neither totally reverse the minoritizing powers of the public sphere nor abolish homophobia, it was nonetheless a way of seeing that allowed him to recognize his friends and in so doing to make his daily news a little less sad a little more sexy.²⁵

The sexy look...

Warhol is most famous for his brightly coloured screen-printed portraits of the rich and famous produced during the 1960s and 70s featuring people like

²³ Flatley J, 'Warhol Gives Good Face: Publicity and the politics of Prosopopoeia' in Doyle, J, Flatley, J, Munoz, J, *Pop Out Queer Warhol*, London, Duke University Press, 1996, p 126

²⁴ Flatley, J, p 126

²⁵ Flatley, J, p 128

Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Elvis Presley. *The Marilyn Diptych* (1962) features an image of Marilyn sourced from a well-known publicity still. The technique of screen-printing involves sorting the colours into separate layers. The different layers are then transferred onto a silk screen either using a stencil or blocking agent to prevent the ink from passing through when the squeegee is pulled across.

From the hand-cut screens it was only a small step to Warhol's use of photo-silkscreens, produced commercially from black-and-white photographs by exposing a screen coated with light-sensitive material. The only areas to harden are those exposed to light, thus selectively blocking the screen so as to let the ink through as a pattern of tiny dots. Much of Warhol's subsequent work was a variation on this technique, which he had begun to use in August 1962.²⁶



figure 22: Andy Warhol
The Marilyn Diptych
Screen printed on canvas
1962

The multiple screen-printed image of Marilyn is produced using a technique involving two layers, firstly the bottom layer that is made up of areas of flat

²⁶ Livingstone, M, 'Do It Yourself: Notes On Warhol's Techniques' in McShine, K, *Andy Warhol: a Retrospective*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p 69

colour, hand painted. The shapes for the colour have been traced from the face on the top layer. The areas of colour are similar to the ones painted on a Barbie doll. To intimate makeup, a smudge of black/blue creates smouldering eyes and a stain of ruby red in the shape of a mouth creates plump lips. The top layer is a photo-silkscreen of the photograph of Marilyn's face in black.

The Marilyn Diptych (1962) is composed of two adjoining canvas. Both panels are saturated with the multiple image of Marilyn's face. The left canvas features both the areas of colour and the black photo effect screen print. The second canvas features just the one black layer of the face of Marilyn in various manifestations of resolution, from murky to wash out. This image is characteristic of Warhol's signature style, using 'pop' colours and the screen printed image.

Of particular importance to my MFA project is Warhol's series of ten works entitled *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'* (1975). These works are critical to the development of my project for significant reasons. Primarily it is the use of the handdrawn line that is made by tracing over a photograph. What I find intriguing is that Warhol has managed to keep a type of vigour in the line that is unusual in the tracing technique, which usually looks quite stiff and contrived. I consider that what has contributed to Warhol's bold use of line when tracing over a photograph is his skill in freehand drawing in general.

An example of Warhol's mastery over drawing is evident in the large series of 'Untitled' drawings using ballpoint pen on paper, done in the late 50s. This group of drawings done on paper, a little bit bigger than A4 size, consist of intimate portraits and nude studies of male friends and lovers. *Untitled 66* (1957) shows a young man, lying on a bed, perhaps, with his arms cushioning his head. The boy's face is side on and he is looking at us through the corner of his eyes. The contour line Warhol uses is constant but sparing. A couple of main lines map the outline of the boy's body, its only details are the hair framing his face, his features and a tattoo on his forearm, that Warhol

considers worth more pen detail. Warhol's later works, and his use of tracing over a photograph can be seen as an extension of his earlier drawing technique and not just as a linear addition of the photograph.



figure 23: Andy Warhol
Untitled
Ball point pen on paper
1957

The ten works in *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'* (1975) all feature a hand drawn element, which mimics the features of photographed images of Jagger. Looking at all 10 images, (similar to viewing a proof sheet of film) you see the young 'wild party man' Jagger from the chest up, running through stock poses that emphasize rock star quality. The images are made of three layers, firstly, shapes of coloured paper like gold, pink, blue and black are stuck onto the paper. The second layer is made using a screen-print of the Polaroid source photograph. The third layer is a screen print of the handdrawn outline of the Polaroid image.

Apparently Warhol never had the patience, even in preparing artwork for colour separations in the fifties, for assuring proper registration of his images, and in his paintings he was prepared to embrace whatever accidents occurred.²⁷

²⁷ Livingstone, M, 'Do It Yourself: Notes On Warhol's Techniques' in McShine, K, *Andy Warhol: a Retrospective.*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p 70

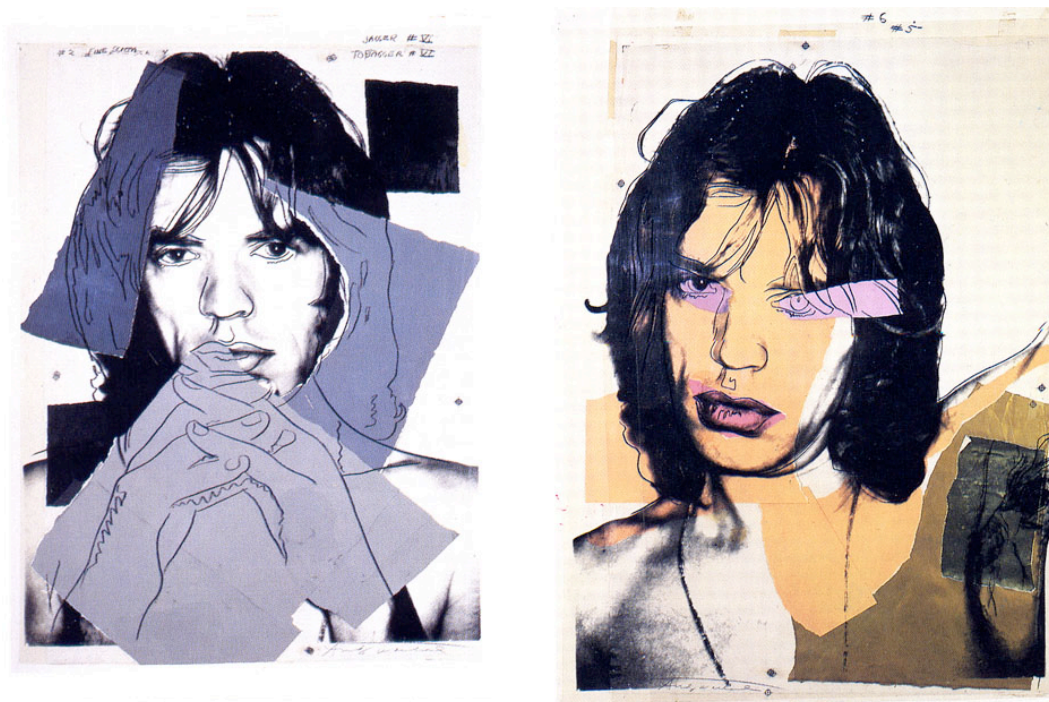


figure 24: Andy Warhol
Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'
Silkscreen ink and acetate on paper
1975

For me the way Warhol layered his overlays of images is exciting, because he exploits the look of 'out of register'. Where the different colour separations do not line up, this leads to a doubling effect in the image. My project has been informed by the ways Warhol exploits the double image using different styles of the one image. For example In the *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'* (1975) Warhol weaves the grungy Polaroid image, shapes of solid colour and the drawn line. Combining the different types of layers create a movement shifting between a scruffy reality and pop fantasy.



figure 25: Andy Warhol
Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'
Silkscreen ink and acetate on paper
1975

I am fascinated by Warhol's images, as he retains the source image in the final work (unlike other pop artists of the time like Allen Jones and Tom Wesselmann). Warhol utilizes industrial printing tools to combine source photograph with bright 'cartoon' colours and line. An important feature in Warhol's work is his colour choice, as most of his work has a very graphic quality, using strong shapes of black. The dark areas formulate the photographic image and bright colour combinations are used to decorate the photographic image or to emphasise elements like lips, eyes and skin. The overall effect is an image that combines elements of grunge, pop, cartoon, line drawing and celebrity glamour culminating in a banal yet intoxicating snapshot.

In my Honours year I began experimenting and developing my own particular colour scheme that would set off my graphic style of work. It was at this time that I began to identify my own colour combination of fire engine red, magenta, black and usually a hint of lime green that offset the girly colours. This colour combination became a tool that I have developed within my MFA project along with the source photograph, traced line drawing and collage.

In bed with your 'come fuck me boots' on

Allen Jones is the British pop artist whose most familiar works are paintings that feature stylized images of women; usually legs encased in shiny rubber and stiletto shoes. Marco Livingstone suggests that between 1964-65 Allen Jones':

[E]xperience of New York marks a move away from a painterly to a harder and more graphic form of representation and from a gentle eroticism to more fetishistically charged subject matter with strong overtones of popular sexual illustration.²⁸



figure 26: Allen Jones
Gallery Gasper
oil on canvas
1966-67

Jones' work raised considerable controversy during the 1960s and 70s. Feminism was in its heyday and the term 'misogynist' was thrown about with gay abandon. Jones as a male artist using images of the female as objects of sexuality (sourced from fetish magazines like *Bizarre*) was a natural target for theorists and critics of the time like Laura Mulvey. Whilst his work certainly takes the reality out of sexuality his images share many similarities with recent work by contemporary female/male photographers and designers of websites. It is this overt-stylisation of sexual stereotypes that I enjoy in Jones' work

²⁸ Livingstone, M, *Pop Art, A Continuing History*, New York, Harry N Abrams, Incorporated, 1990, p 173



figure 27: Bizarre Magazine

A zine in the November 2004 issue of *THE FACE* magazine featured the highlights of the sexiest photo spreads over the last 8 years or so. I bring up this zine because a photograph caught my attention featuring Allen Jones' sculpture *table* (1969). The photograph seems to be of Kylie Minogue²⁹ posing in a sexy bondage outfit, back arched, legs spread in a moment of sexual provocativeness. On the second look you begin to notice Kylie's surroundings; her pose is a complete inversion to the coffee table sculpture of a bondage woman on all fours that is situated next to her in the lounge room, the infamous Allen Jones' *table girl*.

Reading the fine print next to the photo I learnt that the location for Kylie's shot is Elton John's mansion. Printed across a red bubble love heart next to the image David LaChapelle the photographer, lets the reader know:

That the image is about the objectification of women in as much as the Allen Jones table is a facsimile of the real girl. But you know, at the time we were shooting in Elton John's house and the table was just there in his living room.³⁰

²⁹ First time I saw the picture in the *FACE* art zine, I assumed the model was Kylie Minogue, however later looking up the actual *FACE* Aug 02 issue featuring LaChapelle works, I discovered the model is actually Rie Rasmussen.

³⁰ LaChapelle, D, 'Picture this', *THE FACE*, free art zine with May issue, 2004, p 12



figure 28: David LaChapelle photograph

It's a loaded but humorously delivered remark, LaCapelle is aware of the history of Allen Jones' *Table*, 'a real girl' as a misogynist male sexual fantasy. But to me, using visual elements of the male sexual fantasy to make up an image that explores and celebrates versions of female sexual fantasy is a provocative twist on the female objectification theories consuming Allen Jones' work of the late 60s. The photograph of Kylie posed belly up in front of the Allen Jones *Table*, girl posed on all fours, could be said to be a reflection upon the new attitudes towards sex and gender concerning contemporary women and the stereotypes of the pin-up girl.

I am very interested in the connections between the ways Allen Jones constructed his images of female sexual stereotypes (using the pictures he collected from fetish magazines like *Bizarre* and fetish illustrators like Eric Stanton). I feel my interest in soft porn has been informed by Jones' particular style in collecting fetish photography whether it comes from a fashion or mail order fetish magazine. These days photographers borrow from and coax their models into the particular stock of porn poses in magazines ranging from the

trashy celebrity type like *Who* and *New Idea* to the more arty and fashionable *THE FACE* and *Black and White* magazine.

Allen Jones' work today doesn't have the same negative effect because sexual imagery is now exploited and wide-spread throughout popular culture. A friend of mine has just recently come back from teaching English in Japan. She told me a pertinent story about her block of flats in Tokyo where the mailboxes get cluttered with porn advertising. Her next-door neighbour collected the porn pamphlets for a couple of months and sold the lot on E-Bay for fifty dollars, not bad profit for junk mail.³¹

³¹Ashman, K, 2005, pers. Comm, 21 April

The Snap Shot Aesthetic

In this section I want to examine the development of the snap shot aesthetic, with reference to the evolution of my own photographic practice and its significance to my MFA project. I would like to discuss American artist Diane Arbus, who in the 1960s, was at the front of a new wave of social documentary photography. I also want to consider the methods and strategies used by contemporary artists who exploit the snap shot aesthetic, such as Nan Goldin and Wolfgang Tillmans. Of particular relevance to my project is the subject matter of Arbus, Goldin and Tillmans and the way these artists have persuaded and collaborated with their friends to explore sexual stereotypes, alongside capturing particular aspects of lifestyle and attitude. My motivation to depict the sexy aesthetic within the domestic setting comes from artists like Tillmans and Goldin in conjunction with modes of popular culture, like websites and magazines.

The development of the snapshot aesthetic

The first camera was released onto the professional market in 1888 and by the late 1930s due to mass production, and therefore affordability, camera ownership became very common. Cheaper cameras together with the development of film led to a less staged and rigid form of photograph. You no longer had to set-up a tripod and ask the sitters to pose still; the photographer could catch the moments as they happened. Capturing moments of people's lives lead to the development, in the late 1930s, of the snap shooter, who took photos of people in everyday environments doing ordinary things. Gates(1977) suggested these basic snapshots have turned out to be more useful for historians than their more formal counterpart; the restrained professional portrait photograph.³² Background details that can be accidentally recorded

³² Coe, B, Gates, P, *The Snapshot Photograph, the rise of popular photography 1888-1939*, London, Ash & Grant, 1977

within a photo possess, and offer, information as the snapshot imitates reality. These everyday shots offer glimpses of intimate moments within the real surroundings of the captured person or persons. The pictorial result of the moment is often not what it's cracked up to be, more often than not the shot has a gritty, polluted feel to it. The qualities of the snapshot reinforce the cracks by capturing the moment when you let your guard down and acted in an ordinary manner.

Shots taken by amateurs have a particular defective look, partly due to the fact that they are taken without the use of established composition rules and regulations. The arrangement of the photo is usually less than perfect, with heads cut off, odd perspectives, bad lighting and out-of-focus subjects. The snap shot has 'unnecessary' objects/people (you could say, props) in the background. The acceptance of this style of image has led to a whole school of photography, whose protagonists exploit the informal qualities and lack of rules. These devices lead to tensions within the make up of the image that can offer multiple readings for the audience; these lead to responses from laughter to shock (and all the in-betweens). Props that happen to be caught in the photograph can be used within the composition to emphasize the intention.

The shocking edge of documentary

In the late 1960s photographer Diane Arbus was becoming well known for her black and white photographs of transvestites, showgirls and freaks. Arbus' photographs are formal in composition, nevertheless she exploits the nature of the snapshot by her ability to capture rapidly. It has been said about Arbus that she would get the desired image she wanted at the beginning of the photo shoot however she would keep shooting rolls of film.

Arbus gave up working as a fashion photographer to concentrate on her portraits. Perhaps Arbus' capability to capture the 'perfect' world led to her fascination to capture and document the abject in people. Arbus' edgy

documentary style work parallels with the photographs of fellow American artist Larry Clark. 'In *Tulsa* 1971, Clark's photographic book documents the lives of a household of speed junkies he was living with.'³³ Clark's 'shocking' photographs of kids were extreme, depicting homeless youths taking drugs and fucking each other.



figure 29: Diane Arbus
A naked man being a woman
black and white photograph
1968

on the cover of a magazine

By the late 70s American photographer Nan Goldin had begun presenting her snapshot photos as slide shows. *The Ballard of Sexual Dependency* is a slide show taken by Goldin of herself, and her young bohemian friends in their various hangouts. Photographs were taken of lovers and friends performing at drag shows, recovering from nights out, wanking, sleeping and drinking. The low light conditions, soundtracks and the on-going modification of the series emphasised the do-it-yourself approach that formed much of Goldin's aesthetic and subject matter. Capturing the subjects in their environments with their belongings around them emphasizes the loose, 'on the edge' life style Goldin

³³Sussma, E, 'In/Of Her Time: Nan Goldin's Photographs' in Sussum, E, *Nan Goldin I'll be your mirror*, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996, p 30

and her friends were living. Odd viewpoints, out of focus subjects are some of the particular styles of snapshots that Goldin exploits.

Goldin took part in the development of the scandalous style of documentary photographer, recording the trashy side of life. Goldin herself has said, in *the other side*, 'My aspiration was to be a fashion photographer, my goal was to put the queens on the cover of *Vogue*'.³⁴ It's a DIY approach to fashioning your own lifestyle and expressing your sexuality that does not conform to society norms. Inspired by the 70s punk lifestyle and motivated by fashion photography and film Goldin's friends posed for her camera. Props and poses of Goldin's subjects are suggestive of the particular trashy, prescription drug haze glamour made famous by the Warhol factory in the 60s.

In the early 90s Goldin was invited by the magazine *Déjà Vu* to go to Tokyo to meet and work with photographer Nobuyoshi Araki.



figure 30: Nan Goldin
Kana on the phone Tokyo
colour photograph
1994

³⁴Goldin, N, *The other side*, New York, Scalo Publishers, 1993, p 5

Kana on the phone Tokyo (1994) is a colour photograph of a pretty girl on the phone. The girl is squatted down, phone cord stretched across her body with her hand holding the phone up to her ear. The girl's head is tilted, leaning on the phone handle with a glassy look across her face. You notice her costume, black plastic; low cut top, fishnet stockings, black high heel boots. The next thing you become aware of is the red strap-on dildo that is protruding between her thighs. This thin red detail offers explanations of the girl's environment, a sex worker, on the phone during her break. Could she be in between clients, waiting for the computer voice to go through all the options on the other end of the phone? It is the casual nature of the shot that makes you think that it was a fleeting moment during the night. Goldin was hanging around that night with the intention of taking photos when she, possibly, said to the girl hold that pose it's perfect. *Kana on the phone Tokyo* is a depiction of young contemporary women exploiting female stereotypes. The woman performs the role of trashy sex club worker for her means of employment, the modern day Geisha girl with a sprinkle of bondage mistress. As Goldin has said:

Since my early teens, I'd lived by an Oscar Wilde saying, that you are who you pretend to be. I had enormous respect for the courage my friends had in recreating themselves according to their Fantasies.³⁵

In recording the extremes of life Goldin is able to capture her friends' fantasies contained within the realities of their lives. Goldin's photographs capture those flashes of wild lucid conversations you have late in the night in the toilets of a club. Talking through the toilet cubicle wall friends forget about the rent that is due that week and move on to solving the problems of which club will still be open. Goldin's images suggest the contrasting moments in the intoxicated haze when the dodgy nightclub toilet seems to be the perfect spot to do a sexy photo shoot.

³⁵Goldin, N, p 6

so real that they are beyond fake

Wolfgang Tillmans photographs his friends and lovers within their environments. Tillmans portrays the range of extremes from the euphoric club nights, to a still life of an ashtray overflowing the morning after. He speaks of his subjects in his photographs as having attitudes and lifestyles that are 'labelled as part of a generalized "youth culture" and that tend to be presented as something transitory and playful, something which will be straightened out at a later date.'³⁶ However, like Goldin, Tillmans' friends are not going through an adolescent phase, it is a life style choice.

What I am really doing is looking for people who have a similar approach to life –who take seriously what is normally dismissed as a phase and become comfortable with it.³⁷

In the late 80s Tillmans began getting his work published in i-D, taking photographs of friends for fashion spreads, as well as photographs of people at political rallies and dance parties. Fashion inspired by poverty was an element behind the development of i-D, a magazine that represented and documented the alternative side of British/European youth culture.

The magazine's (i-D) clarion call for self-invention underwrote photographs that celebrated the grey skies, garage-strewn sky decks of council tower blocks and the pub, club and park toilets that provided the necessary moment of privacy for a shot of heroin or sexual encounter.³⁸

The photographs of Tillmans and Goldin have inspired the new generation of fashion and advertising photographers, who exploit the look of people on the edges of mainstream society and incorporate the everyday within the pictorial space. Tillmans sees little difference between the art world and the world of advertising, or between fantasy and reality. In a gallery installation setting

³⁶ Verwoert, J, *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Phaidon, 2002, p 124

³⁷ Verwoert, J, p 124

³⁸ Blazwick, I, 'Feel no Pain', *Art Monthly UK*, no 221, 1998, p 9

Tillmans pins up his photographic magazine spreads alongside his photographs and large digital prints. Tillmans does not discriminate between his magazine work and his 'art' photography.

Tillmans exploits the snapshot aesthetic giving his work viewpoints that look as though he woke up next to his lover or was sitting in his lounge room opposite a friend. The casual nature of the settings and backdrops offer the viewer information on the photographed person's reality. These everyday surroundings lead to an intimate feel in the photographs. However, Tillmans does not just take a happy snap of a friend, the photograph is staged; the model is acting out a fantasy and performing a part in the collaboration.



figure 31: Wolfgang Tillmans
Rachel Auburn and son
colour photograph
1995

Tillmans' *Rachel Auburn and son* (1995) is a colour photograph of a woman and a boy. The first subject is a sexy woman posing in her black skimpy underwear with a pair of headphones hugging her neck. The woman with her

theatrical makeup along with the unconventional backdrop of the home recording/DJ setting convinces us that the woman is a performer of some kind or at least a lover of music. The spiralling cord of the headphones the woman wears falls down her belly towards her crotch where the arms of a young boy intercept it. The second subject the boy is resting his head on the woman's backside while wrapping himself around her upper thighs. The woman's back is arched extending the curves of her body and having the same effect on the body as a pair of high stilettos. The curve of her backside forms the perfect spot for the young boy to close his eyes and rest his head, while she reaches back placing her hand on his shoulder to soothe him. Tillmans' photographs position his friends in situations that fool around and push the borders of acceptable behaviour and 'normal' expression of human sexuality.

Friends make the best models

The common thread linking Tillmans, Goldin and Arbus is their fascination for the outsider and the ability to capture the dreams and fantasies of their subjects within their everyday surroundings. As Tillmans explains, his friends pose for a photograph but 'they are impersonators of their own and my ideas-of an image. So they really in the truest sense of the word model situations for me'.³⁹

This is an approach I approximate in my own photo shoots. Whilst the situation is staged, the models are acting out parts of their lives (both real and fantasy) under my loose direction. Elements of dress-up and sleaze are matched with the mundane and ad-hoc of ordinary surroundings.

'What I am doing is incorporating the notion of masquerade into my version of truth.'⁴⁰

³⁹ Verwoert, J, p 127

⁴⁰ Verwoert, J, p 126

The Bad Girl

The term bad girls began to be a recognizable phrase within an artistic and cultural context in the early 90s with a show curated by Marcia Tucker held at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, called *Bad Girls*. In the catalogue essay Tucker describes the work in the show having:

[A] distinctly different spirit from much of the 'feminist' art of the 1970s and 80s. It's irreverent, anti-ideological, non-doctrinaire, non-didactic, unpolemical and thoroughly unladylike.⁴¹

In the 1990s new feminist debates were arising out of the 1980s 'sex wars'⁴² developing the ideas of sexuality, sex and gender. It was suggested that feminism could act as a vehicle in 'expanding rather than contracting the field of sex and sexuality for women'.⁴³ Pro-sex feminists proposed that sexual analysis could be about more than just the rigid upkeep of popular and 'straight' morality and perhaps be about sexual exploration, expression and liberation.

Artists taking part in the 'Bad Girls' show were exploring the new ideas of feminist writers like Gayle Rubin who were arguing that 'if feminism is to renew its position on sex/uality, it must stop assuming that sex/gender readily explains everything'.⁴⁴ Artists in *Bad Girls* were women like the 'Post Porn Modernist,' Annie Sprinkle, who explored female sexuality and gender concepts which Rubin was putting forward. Sprinkle and co-maker Maria Beatty showed their video titled *Sluts and goddess video workshop or How to be a sex goddess in 101 easy steps*. Just from the title you can imagine some fairly different audience reactions - from disgust to laughter - I guess

⁴¹ Tucker, M, *Bad Girls*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1994, p 10

⁴² The 'Sex wars' is a term to describe the heated debates between pro sex feminists and cultural feminists that occurred in the 1980s.

⁴³ Wei Leng, K, 'Sex and Sexualities, Contemporary feminist debate', in Hughes, K, *Contemporary Australian Feminism 2*, South Melbourne, Longman, 1997, p 85

⁴⁴ Wei Leng, K, p 99

depending on the viewer's taste. Annie Sprinkle, a former porn star, dancer and prostitute lives and works in New York and Amsterdam. 'She works in a wide range of media from writing articles and books on sex, through to producing cd's, photographs, web pages and live performances.'⁴⁵

'Sprinkle transforms her own erotic experiences into a sort of manifesto that intertwines Asian philosophies, political tensions, meditation, yoga and liberation within a framework you could call trash sex.'⁴⁶ I find interesting Sprinkle's openness in the way she explores female sexuality by playing with female sexual stereotypes like the bad girl and slut. I feel that Sprinkle's work is an important part of the re-invention of active female sexual stereotypes, and has contributed to the younger female generation being 'out there; meaning that women are participating in the construction of new female sexual identities by playing with and confusing the readings of existing stereotypes.



figure 32: Annie Sprinkle
Anatomy of a Pin-up Photo
photograph by Zorro
1997

The photograph *Anatomy of a Pin-up Photo* (1997) shows a cheesy Sprinkle fitted out in a bondage outfit. Using the template of a human anatomy poster Sprinkle cuts into the particular look of the pin up photograph using humorous comments that inform the viewer of the tricks of the trade. Using arrows

⁴⁵ Miglietti, F, *Extreme body*, Milano, Skira Editore, 2003, p 152

⁴⁶ Miglietti, F, p 152

pointing to key parts that make up the 'image' Sprinkle gives the audience some behind the scenes observation. The arrows pointing to her legs, encased in thigh high red lace boots, tell the viewer that she 'borrowed them from a friend', they 'are killing her feet because they're are 2 sizes too small'. Other arrows on the photograph let us know that 'the corset she is wearing hides a big belly', 'the boobs are real' but 'the bra is too small so makes the breasts look bigger'. More arrows in the photograph inform the viewer of 'the mandatory face and body makeup and that the long black gloves cover her tattoos for a more 'All American girl effect' and while this is all going on Sprinkle is still all sexed up and ready to go; sort of!

At least the naughty school girls like it

Whilst the term bad girls originated in connection to the Marcia Tucker New York show, it is no longer just a term used to describe feisty feminist art, but a popular cliché that has developed out of the original negative meaning. Alongside art, the notion of the deliberately bad girl has gained acceptance in popular culture. One such influence has been Madonna; her music, film clips and fashion have inspired numerous books and articles such as the book *Madonna Connection, Representational politics, Subcultural Identities, and Cultural Theory*. In the book, Susan Bordo's chapter 'Material girl' offers up some interesting insights suggesting that:

[F]or the middle class 'wanna-bes' Madonna offered up a sexuality that was independent of patriarchal control and that defied rather than rejected the male gaze, teasing it with her own gaze, deliberately trashy and vulgar.⁴⁷

The Bad girl has hit the mainstream in contemporary culture; with pop cultural icons like Kylie Minogue, alongside ordinary girls exploiting the looks of porn

⁴⁷ Bordo, S, 'Material Girl: the Effacements of Post modern Culture', in Schwichtenbergs, C, *Madonna Connection, Representational politics, Sub cultural Identities, and Cultural Theory*, St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1993, p 283

and being rude in everyday life. A recent promo shot of Kylie is a perfect example of just how much the look of porn has imbedded our popular consciousness, being recalled when the situation calls for it. The image of Kylie has that hazy soft look, her head cocked to the side, fondling her microphone up close to her parted lips. Effortlessly Kylie is able to run through the stock of sexual innuendo poses and choose one that takes her fancy, alluding to a state of sexual excitement just like any girl wearing frosted pink lipstick on the cover of those dated porno videos.



figure 33: Kylie Minogue

Japanese schoolgirls are on the one hand demure, hard working, on the other hand responsible for what has become known as the schoolgirl sock fetish. Over the last five years the schoolgirl trend of wearing particular styles of white socks 'has spawned a country wide Lolita complex in many adult males'.⁴⁸ Photographer Kayo Ume's portraits capture Japanese schoolgirls acting up in the traditional sailor girl school uniform of a pleated skirt, scarf and white socks. In the image the girls are hanging out, maybe having a sleep over, staying up late gossiping. In one image two young girls are standing in a small kitchen facing the viewer, one is laughing with her hands covering her mouth,

⁴⁸ Sanders, M, '008-061 kid reflex' in Sanders, M, Sawa, F, Tsuzuki, K, *REFLEX Contemporary Japanese Self-portraiture*, London, Trolley Limited, 2003, p 008

the other girl tastes soup from a ladle, her eyes cast downwards towards the suspicious looking carrots poking out of their jeans. You can't help but laugh, thinking if their parents saw these photos they would kill them. A few more of the photographs show the girls in school uniform staring up at the viewer while simulating fellatio on bananas. You can almost hear their giggles as you watch them lift their school skirts up over their heads showing their nickers or, handcuffed, jumping up and down blowing bubbles. Ume has been able to infiltrate private spaces to take photographs that seem like they were taken by one of their own. He has shown these young girls acting rudely and having fun just like other groups of young women around the world.



figure 34: Kayo Ume
photograph
2003



figure 35: Yuki Kumura
photograph
2003

Another Japanese photographer Yuki Kumura is also interested in capturing young women playing up. The girls in Kumura's images stick basketballs up their jumpers to pretend to be pregnant or do silly and suggestive acts like 'moon' the photographer. Kumura plays with the nice and typical image of girls hanging out and shows what real girls get up to when playing. When you look at the image of the two girls at the beach you see one of the girls looking at as

over her shoulder as she is pulling her pants down to show us her bum. The carefree nature of the pose is contrasted with the carefully placed packet of cigarettes covering the crack of her bum. The humour within the image is very appealing because it captures ordinary girls hamming it up for the camera.

You bad girl! where did you get that t-shirt?

In the early 90s two British artists, Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas, opened a shop that ran for six months in London. In the shop they sold all manner of hand made things from key rings, to t-shirts with painted slogans like 'have you wanked over me yet?' These women were part of a new generation of young British artists (yBa) who were causing ripples in the established art world with their use of the everyday and the sensational within their practices. The atmosphere upon entering the shop was described by Collings 'as having a punky drive to always be drawing attention to rudeness and all its influence'.⁴⁹



figure 36: Tracy Emin
Good Smile Great Come
pink neon
2000

Both Emin and Lucas play with the language of sex in their work, it is bland and can be sexist, crass and ordinary. Lucas uses soft porn magazine photographs and headings to make collage and for Emin smutty adages become neon signs. One of Emin's neon signs that fascinates me is

⁴⁹Collings, M, *Sarah Lucas*, London, Tate Publishing, 2002, p 22

Good Smile Great Come. This work is informed by the offhand comments sometimes made by people discussing their everyday sexual adventures. Conversations are often peppered with phrases such as 'how hot the chick/bloke was' or 'what a great pair of legs, shame about the face'.

Sarah Lucas' first solo show held at City Racing Gallery, London 1992, was titled *penis nailed to a board*. The title was appropriated from a news headline in the *Sunday Sport* tabloid about a group of men torturing themselves and sexually getting off on it. Included in the show was a board game that Lucas had made out of news clippings using the headlines and mug shots of the men involved.

Collings states 'it was a key event because it introduced her main theme: representations of gender - not what it means to be male or female, but how people come up with symbols that represent gender difference. Collings goes on to say that the individual works were symbols of modern attitudes to sex and gender. You could say the objects had two codes - a popular one and also a critical one that comes from feminism.'⁵⁰

What I like about Lucas' work is the humour within it, either as a sexual one-liner used in the title; the placing of beer cans, eggs and fish in suggestive places; or making a concrete cast of a rude hand gesture. Using these everyday one-liners and stereotypes allows 'anyone who's ever watched TV to get Lucas' work, and it isn't really for those in the know about Dworkin and Mitchell (cultural feminists)' as Collings has suggested.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Collings, M, p 22

⁵¹ Collings, M, p 29



figure 37: Sarah Lucas
The Law
 C-type print
 1997

Lucas' image *The Law* (1997) is a perfect example of contemporary society's insatiable urge for the tabloid titillation fix; catching what other ordinary people or celebrities get up to after a few drinks, or behind closed doors. The photograph is of Lucas, in daggy old jeans, smashed up sneakers sitting on a concrete slab with her legs spread reading the *Sun* newspaper. Just think of any labourer hanging out at lunchtime checking out the page three bikini girl. Lucas' head is hidden behind the headlines; the block she is sitting on has the words 'the law' carved in it. This image can be read on various levels; we live in a media dominated culture full of gender identifications that when played with can subvert the sexual stereotypes.

girl under the table

In 1995, Sarah Lucas made a work called *Bitch*. She used ready-made objects that when combined suggest a female body who is 'up for' a bit of action. A second hand table has a t-shirt placed over one half, hanging on the underside are two big fat melons, which have their nipples poking through the two circle cuts made in the shirt. Hanging on the end of the table is a vacuum packed smoked fish.

Lucas said herself about *Bitch*

[I]n a way its very cartoonish but the other side is that the kipper is pretty horrible. And there's that thing of cutting the T-shirt, the cuts in it for the melons, which is kind of brutal. Maybe its something like what you see in pornography, where you actually make something purposefully more rude.⁵²



figure 38: Sarah Lucas
Bitch
Table, melons, t-shirt, vacuum-packed fish
1995

Again several readings are offered in *Bitch*, one could be an interpretation of the derogatory female stereotype of the local pub sluts cruising for free beer. Or, as Julian Stallabrass suggested *Bitch* is 'a sophisticated parody of Allen Jones' infamous *Table* (1969)'.⁵³ Both Jones' *Table* and Lucas' *Bitch* have appropriated the bad girl. Jones used the 60s fetishist bondage women who

⁵² Collings, M, p 99

⁵³ Stallabrass, J, *High Art Lite*, London, Verso, 1999, p 91

these days remind me of the saying 'groovy baby' while also being a slick feature piece in Elton John's mansion. Lucas has taken the slick soft porn model, all in black rubber, down to her local for a few pints. Perhaps Lucas has purposely downscaled the aesthetic look using smutty humour, one-liners, and everyday objects within *Bitch*. All the above are strategies employed by the current tabloid media to capture the audience's attention. As Catherine Lumby wrote in her book *Bad girls*, the mass media is 'far from representing the voice of patriarchal authority, the mass media is a daily reminder of the unstable ground on which notions of gender, sexuality and even nationhood are built in the late 20th Century'.⁵⁴

Pussy whipped tour 2003

Striking a chord with my project was work featured in the 2003 Primavera show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney by a group of four Sydney artists who call themselves The Kingpins. These artists are renowned for their 'live performances and gallery installations and launch their critique at traditional stereotypes through the device of 'drag'.⁵⁵ One particular photograph of their live performance features the four girls acting out their 'Cock Rock' scenario. It's a typical image of two sexed up male 'heavy rock' stars leaving the concert stadium with two slutty groupies hanging off an arm. One of the rock stars turns to look at the viewer and points to his mates' shirt that has 'pussy whipped tour' printed on it. These guys (two of the female artists in drag) have scored and no doubt score every night on tour. The two slutty groupies feature the low-slung hipsters that expose the obligatory g-string. I enjoy how these artists take on contemporary sexual images by playing with stereotypes like the rock slut and gangsta rapper. I can make connections between the ways the English bad girls Sarah and Tracey employed smutty tabloid humour and how The Kingpins play with stereotypes to offer views on female experience in contemporary society.

⁵⁴ Lumby, C, *Bad Girls the media, sex & feminism in the 90's*, St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1997 p 14

⁵⁵ Pierce, J, *Primavera 2003*, Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003

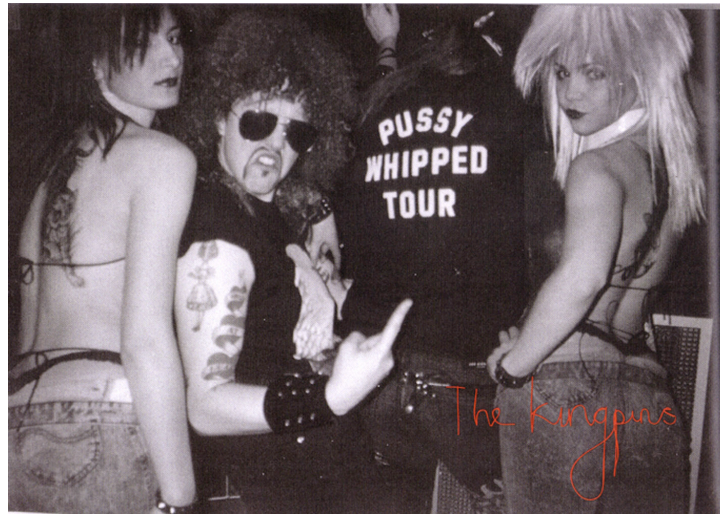


figure 39: The Kingpins

Of interest to my project is how The Kingpins set up their photo shoots. I love the way they exploit with props and costumes that play with the sexual stereotypes within popular culture. Looking at the music inspired works, you can imagine The Kingpins watching music video clips on *rage*, laughing and scheming up their performance-cum-photo shoots. Also of interest to my project is how the artists involved in The Kingpins put across a dialogue that employs collage when constructing the sexual characters and music featured in their works

One of the artists in The Kingpins, Techa Noble, is also an illustrator who has worked for *Mambo* and *Geek Girl magazine*. I find this an interesting fact because as Noble has said 'Mambo's culture is based in humour and irony, visual devices and quirks'.⁵⁶ It's these devices used in contemporary media that feed into the work of all the bad girl artists I have discussed in this section, as they do with my own project.

⁵⁶ Ricketson, B, 'Techa Noble & Kingpins Cover Design Story/ Interview', *Cyclic Defrost*, issue 6, 2003, viewed 29 June 2004, <http://www.cyclicdefrost.com/article.php?article=275>

The Combination of Sex, Girls, Music and Graphics

graphism on the web

It's a fact that the Internet features a hell of a lot of pornography, you only have to do a google search for cute puppy dogs and the sexual nature of sites, that come up linked to puppies, is scary. However there are websites that feature and capture contemporary lifestyles that are sexy, loud and designed interestingly. Of particular interest to my project is the type of site that combines raunchy images with music, or draws attention to the sexual adventures of the sites' protagonists. I have always been attracted to this imagery and have collected flyers and zines, etc. since my late teens. Living in a regional city I have had less opportunity to collect flyers (though my brother and mates do send me stuff); however, the Internet offers opportunities now to check out and download what designers and artists are doing via webzines and websites.



figure 40: porno combo

A website that has impacted on my project is pornocombo featuring illustrations, animations and photographs from artists and designers throughout the world. Below the title is a subheading stating that pornocombo is a 'combination of sex, music and graphism'. The site has three main pages for illustrations, photographs and lastly animations. Each page has a series of

thumbnail images that you can click on to view a larger image or animation. This website was one of the first I came across during my project and has remained a source of enjoyment and inspiration because it combines all the 'right' elements. All the work featured on the site plays with the pornographic image, either using sourced imagery or creating its own. For example, designer Shibari has employed elements of a pornographic site by creating his own brand called *Asian Doll's Society*. The work is developed using a branding concept and is a series of photo pin up posters of hot Asian chicks posing provocatively, featuring his *Asian Doll's Society* logo.

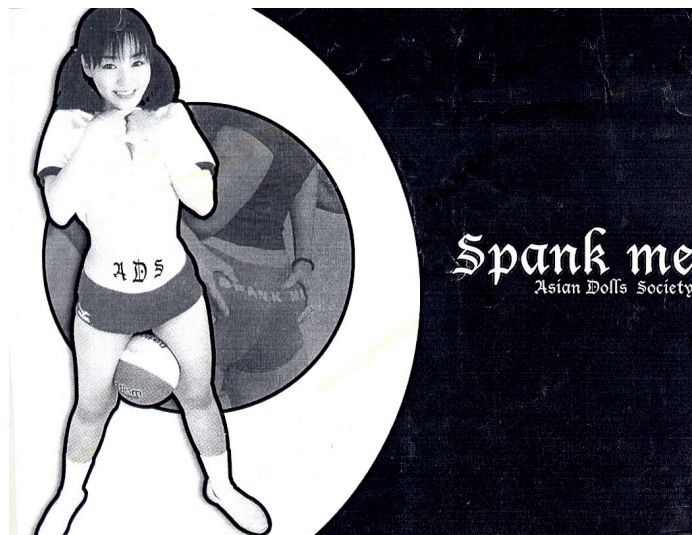


figure 41: Asian Doll's Society

The works featured in the website employ graphic styles like vector line illustrations that are developed by layering the photographic, line drawing and solid colour together. It is these particular techniques of collage that have played an important part in the development of my own work. Almost all my sketchbooks have printouts of images and designs from the pornocombo site. An animation that combines the photographic image along with the illustration featured on pornocombo.com is Andres R Perez' *bidet*. This very graphic style animation runs for about a minute, featuring an electro soundtrack. The imagery is based on seven different images of sexy women; a girl wearing only high heels, lying back provocatively, kneeling with legs spread, bum poking out

in little shorts. The piece features each woman in a semi photographic state then transforms elements of the image using a graphic vector outline style. Even though, unlike my own work the animation *Bidet* features a very slick 'designer' finish I enjoy the electro soundtrack; the punchy style in editing very similar to music film clips. For example, the second girl featured in the animation is seen as an image of topless women whose boobs are drawn over and begin pulsating and enlarging into a digital form. This animation is important to the development of the moving image work within my project.

figure 42: *Bidet* still

Oops I didn't mean to click

I surf the web everyday, either for enjoyment, checking my emails or for research. I have stumbled across some of my favourite sites while surfing, others have been suggested to me by friends or other artists and designers. What I like about the Internet is that it breaks down the conventions between design and art because a website that is designed well can function on a commercial level as well as an artistic one. I can appreciate a website regardless of content because of the design features like animations and bright colour combinations. But my prime interest would be the content.

Surfing the web is similar to what you do when you first enter a newsagent; you go straight to your favourite sections and scan the covers. If something grabs your attention you pick it up and skim through the pages. When finished, you move on to your second area of interest and so on. For me this is like entering Salamanca newsagent, firstly I make sure the owner is not around (he

has a habit of coming up and hassling me). When safe I go and check out the youth lifestyle stuff, like *Yen*, and *The Face*. Next I turn to the design/art section and check out idN, *Desktop*, then the computer section and before leaving I check out the trashy photos of celebrities featured in *Who* and *Woman's Day*.

For me the newsagents suggests a parallel to the Internet, I have favourite sites because I like the design and navigation layout. Other sites are of interest for the animation qualities or the sexual nature. An interesting situation occurred during one of my web design classes that highlights the content and design dialogue within the web. As part of class discussion, the lecturer asked students to give a presentation of an aspect of web design focusing on the layout or the cultural content. As the particular student got up from his computer to give his talk, he mentioned that the website *lafilledo.com* he was about to discuss was of a provocative nature but he was only really interested in the great design and navigation of the site. We all laughed when the lingerie site came up on the projection screen. It did have an unusual navigation system based on scrolling horizontally rather than the usual vertical; *Lafilledo.com* is an example of a site that works with an artistic point of view while featuring a subtle level of commercialism.



figure 43: La Fille Do

This site appealed to me because I like the content as well as the messy aesthetic with a black background and the hot pink lines drawn over images. As you scrolled across the site you would see various groups of provocative images as hotspots that, when clicked, would animate in some way with sound. Within the site you can also see photo shoots of chicks modelling the lingerie. The photos are very sexy; one of my favourites shows a girl lying back across the front seat of a car with her undies around her ankles.

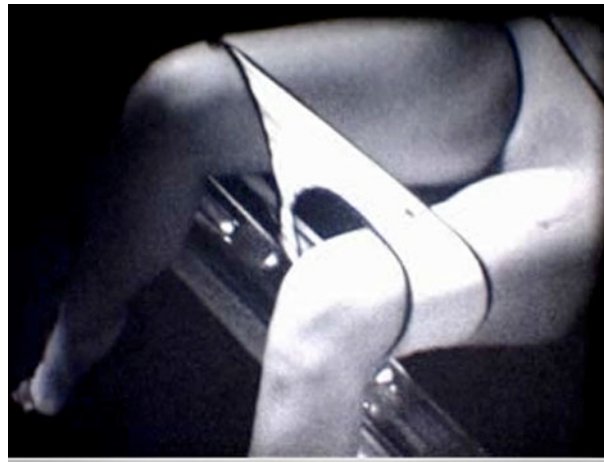


figure 44: La Fille Do

At the initial stage of my MFA, I came across an artist whose main viewing platform is the web, photographer Natasha Merritt. Her website digitalgirlys.com is a site that allows viewers to look at photographs and the movies she takes of her personal and sexual life. As a viewer, you are able to preview a selection of Merritt's photos, but to go further into the website and view more 'hard core' photos and movies you have to join up as a member and pay a fee. It is a visual diary that explores her intimate sexual experiences. Some of the images have a particularly scotopic feel to them because the images are self-taken. Merritt's photographs also feature odd-cropping, extreme close-ups and weird angles. It's these visual aspects along with the use of digital camera that make up Merritt's particular aesthetic.

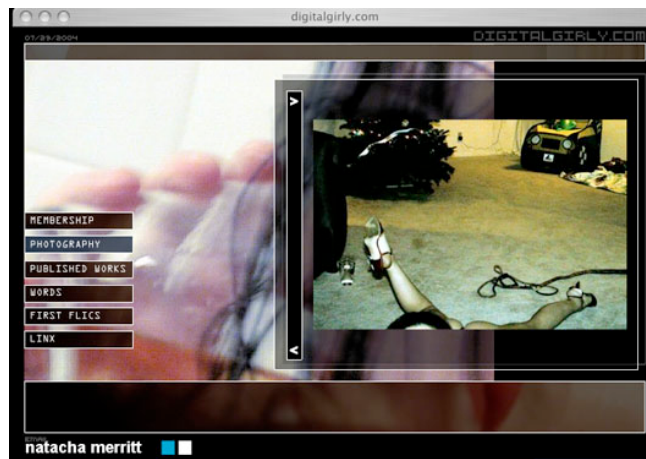


figure 45: digitalgirly.com

A photographer friend told me a relevant story which relates to how Merritt takes her own photographs. My friend was showing her boyfriend some photos she took of herself the night before in their lounge room. The images used some odd angles and body parts so her boyfriend got a bit shocked and asked who took the photographs, thinking that somebody had been taking erotic photos of her. He did not believe her when she said that she took them herself. What links my friend and Merritt is their use of technology, even if you don't have a swivel screen on your digital camera you can still look at the photograph a second after its been shot and make the necessary adjustments for the next shot.



figure 46: *Red Lips 13_.TIFF*

One of Merritt's images *Red Lips 13_.TIFF* is representative of the type of photos she takes. It shows Merritt on all fours, peering up at us from the left

side of the image. The middle of the image features a mirror reflection of her backside. The image implies that Merritt is about to perform felatio, however you realise that she could quite possibly be in the room alone, the reflection in the mirror suggests she is leaning on an empty chair. Merritt's image *Red Lips 13_TIFF* is reminiscent of the sexual innuendo often indulged in by people, maybe at a party, a bit drunk and hamming it up for the camera.

Suicidegirls.com

I have been checking out the suicide girls web site since late 2002 and found the developments within the site and the growing popularity of the site fascinating. The site features hundreds of photographs of girls flirting and posing for the camera. One of the site creators Missy takes most of the photographs of the suicide girls herself. Entering the site you go on tour, the first page invites you to read new quotes from magazine articles like 'they're the girls next door - but more colourful and with better record collections' (spin magazine). In 2004 articles about suicide girls were published by magazines like *Black and White* and *The Face*.



figure 47: suicidegirls.com

I see this site as one of the first websites to produce a type of alternative to the soft porn that you usually see within popular media, that of silicone boobs, penis implants and fake tans. This style of website has been coined as 'alt

porn' (alternative porn) and at present as noted on the livejournal.com site there are 72 websites listed as part of the alt porn revolution. With web site addresses like hotpunkgirl.com and artschoolgirls.com, these sites offer up cocktails of ordinary chicks posing with their tattoos, piercing and fishnet stockings. The variety of poses range from pin-up, fetish to soft-and hard-core porn. All the sites have a photograph gallery and feature online chat forums where people can make comments on their favourite model and her tattoos, or models can discuss their day-to-day lives.

I agree with Amy Roe, who wrote that suicide girls 'has a image more evocative of an indie record label than an adult entertainment company, Suicide Girls has become the code word for a new, sex-positive brand of cool'.⁵⁷ As Missy said the 'ultimate goal is for the suicide girls to become a lifestyle brand for generation Y in the way that *Playboy* was a cultural beacon for the swinging bachelors of the 1960s and 70s'.⁵⁸

I regularly enjoy checking out the suicide girls site for the hundreds of photographs. I love all the brightly coloured tattoos some of the girls have and the skimpy outfits they pose in. I like the fact that they are ordinary girls in their everyday surroundings, like the image of Amelie, kneeling on top of the kitchen bench, holes in her fishnet stockings, hands on either side of her hips peeling off her black undies. What I find relevant to my project is that Amelie isn't situated in a sterile backdrop. The model is in her own or the photographer's surroundings, so the corner of the microwave can be seen along with alcohol bottles lined up next to the kitchen sink. It is this type of photograph offering up information of the girls' surroundings that I find the most interesting on suicide girls website.

⁵⁷ Roe, A, The calculated assault of suicidegirls.com, viewed on the 13 January 2005 <http://www.wweek.com/print.php?story=3716>

⁵⁸ Gaynor, J, 'Suicidegirls.com, a grrrl-empowered playboy for the post-punk generation' *Black & White*, issue 70, Jan, 2004,



figure 48: Amelie

My interest in all the sites I have previously mentioned led to my decision in developing a website for my own project **homegroan girls**. In it I feature my own images and animations of ordinary bad girls. Some of the photographs I viewed on the websites I have been researching have fed into my own photo shoots, for example the photo of the suicide girl Amelie on the kitchen bench inspired my photo shoots of my friends Sue and Hanna running around topless with shopping bags in my kitchen. Also the various knickers featuring the websites logos, like suicide girls, is a concept I employed when developing a very small print run of *homegroan girl undies*. Before selling the limited edition undies and singlets I organised a photo shoot with a friend. That night in my computer room, we took about a hundred digital photographs of my friends arse with **homegroan girls** printed across the different coloured undies she wore throughout the night.



figure 49: suicidegirls undies



figure 50: homegroangirls undies

The content of the websites, of particular interest to my project, explore and weave in and out of pure titillation, commercial enterprise and visual media like animation and design. The sites also capture contemporary lifestyles and the nature of modern sexuality. The common thread between the websites I have mentioned is the use of the digital technology they engage with to produce their websites. The nature of digital technology allows for instantaneous access to the continuing evolvement and expansion of the content of the websites. This allows my investigation to be conducted in real-time and provides a constant source of fresh inspiration.

Part Three: How The Project Was Pursued

In this part I discuss previous works that led to the undertaking of my research and then go on to explore the three stages of my MFA project, *trash team racing, half and half* and, the body of works that makes the final submission, *homegroan girls*. In examining each stage I discuss the working methods that I developed and explored and give a description of the final works.

Previous works that have influenced my project

My Honours project title was *game girls*, a visual exploration in paint media of female sexual stereotypes in popular computer game culture. I used motifs of the computer game world, such as visual symbols, hardware and related words and phrases (for example game play commands) as the building blocks for the formal content of the paintings.



figure 51: *back up team* 2001

From *game girls*, there emerged a couple of significant moments and works that have influenced my current project. Firstly, a wall painting *insert to continue* (2001) was conceived for the Foyer installation gallery, Salamanca, Hobart. The work used an outline drawing of a girl in high heel shoes, holding a Playstation gun, bending over to fix her jeans. The girl was standing on a platform of horizontal coloured stripes. The concept for the work was a piece of my writing about a girl in cyber space playing a 'shoot em up game' stopping to pull up her jeans.

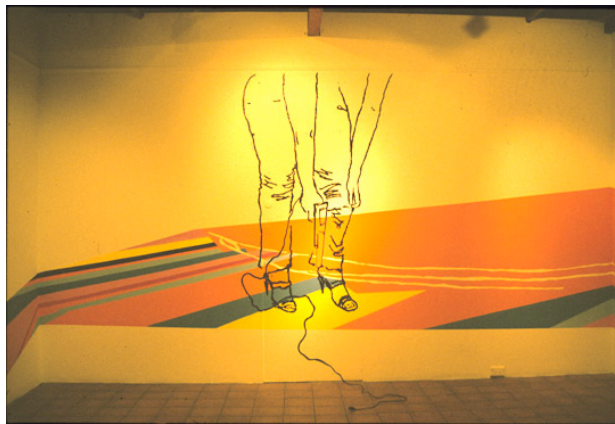


figure 52: *insert to continue* 2001

Using Photoshop, I constructed an image, which was then printed out. This was projected in an enlarged form, so the girl was on the main wall and the corners of the platform wrapped around the other two walls of the gallery. The cord of the gun, that was painted on the wall, melded into an actual cord that was placed on the gallery floor. I used enamel paint for the outline of the girl and chose sign writing paint for the intense colour needed for the platform. I enjoyed the freedom of not being restricted to the size of the aluminium sheet that I had previously used when painting with enamel paint.

Although this work was realised in paint, it marks a time when I began thinking about and experimenting with animation and became keyed up by digital image making. I was excited by the possibility of work that could immerse the

viewer either within the digital space or by the sheer scale of work like *insert to continue*.

In my Honours year, photography, another part of my practice became significant. During my early undergrad studies my then boyfriend was an aspiring photographer and I used to borrow his camera to take photographs. These became the source material for my paintings. We broke up soon after my first year and a close friend gave me an instamatic Kodak camera, (that she had bought in Bali in the 80s). I loved this camera because I could take it out to nightclubs and it didn't matter if it got stolen, as it wasn't worth much. As I began to take more and more photos I developed an aptitude for exploiting the dodgy qualities the camera had. Also at this time I experimented with methods that would place emphasis on the gestures of the subject. These composition techniques included cropping the figure, odd angles and headless figures.

I used that blue camera for about 5 years and it ending up superseding my drawing sketchbook. The images of friends playing around, posing provocatively spurred my determination to illustrate the environment and lifestyle of friends and myself. The camera and I went everywhere capturing spontaneously posed sessions with friends at the pub and organized thematic photo shoots.



figure 53: *art school ball* 2001

It was at this time that I was invited to exhibit a series of four photographs in a group show at CAST called *somewhere between then and now* curated by Kylie Johnson. The photographs were scanned and then digitally printed to 56 x 84cm. The series of four works were images of friends out and about. One of the works *Art school ball 2000*, is a close up of my friend flashing her bum at an art school party and in the right hand corner you can make out someone's finger pointing to her bum. The works in the show caused a bit of a stir in our circle of acquaintances as they were trying to figure out whose bum or cleavage it was in the photographs, as the heads were cropped out of the image.



figure 54: *pit stop at mates place* 2001

For the first time the photographs became more than just source material. It was an exciting time and I began to realize the possibilities of embracing the photograph as an important aspect of my work. Previously I had only really thought of them as something just done for 'fun'. That blue camera captured all the source photos for my undergrad and Honours project and, more importantly, stimulated my considerable interest in developing and using the photographic image in some way within my MFA project.

Phase One -*trash team racing*

Early experiments within my MFA project

My Honours work looked at female sexual stereotypes within cyber culture. It steered my MFA project towards the popular bad girl stereotype in contemporary culture. I began the initial stage of my research into the bad girl stereotype by looking at exhibitions and artists who took part in *bad girls* which was curated by Marcia Tucker. I also began reading books like *bad girls* by Catherine Lumby and *sick boys and bad girls, fantasies in contemporary art and culture* by Linda Kauffman.⁵⁹

Artists of interest were Michael Craig Martin for his colourful and large wall paintings of outlines of objects; along with the huge digital print and paint installation by Michel Majerus inspired by pop culture. Japanese artists like Takashi Murakami who is inspired by animation comics were of interest and books like *my reality, contemporary art in the culture of Japanese animation*.⁶⁰ At this early stage of my project I proposed a series of wall paintings and animations for my final exhibition. I had a long way to go and I needed to learn more about making animation and to find appropriate sites to install wall paintings. At one of my first meetings with my supervisor we discussed making digital image testers for proposed wall paintings and the need to keep taking photos of friends. This time was marked with lots of experiments and it was fairly confusing as I tried to break free of my previous working methods.

During the first phase of my project, fellow artist Kylie Johnson and I decided to propose a group show with the working title *Players, The Tiff and Kylie Show*. The show was based on our practices; we both site our work within popular culture and take our content from direct, personal life experience. We received the August slot in the Contemporary Art Services Tasmania (CAST) 03

⁵⁹ Kauffman, Linda, *sick boys and bad girls, fantasies in contemporary art and culture*, London, University of California Press, 1998

⁶⁰ Fleming, J, Talbott, S, Murakami, T, *My Reality, contemporary art in the culture of Japanese animation*, New York, Des Moines Art Center, 2001

calendar along with the November slot of the same year at Gallery Wren in Sydney. In the early stage I proposed a wall painting and video projection but as I got closer to the exhibition my proposal changed considerably.

trash team racing

I began working on some digital designs using photographs taken of friends over the summer holidays. I was still collecting images of computer game characters and titles from game magazines and a title that caught my attention was ***trash team racing***. I collaged together traced outlines of photographs of friends with these words. The first design featured an outline of a girl lying on the grass and a girl sitting down playing a computer game both within a computer game interface, along with a game creature and the words 'trash team racing'.



figure 55: trash team digital sketch 2002



figure 56: trash team racing 2002

To expand beyond the spatial restrictions of the 'canvas' I experimented with the idea of painting my designs across both a sheet of aluminium and the wall it was fixed to. The second design was made up of these two elements using a slice of irregular aluminium across the lower half and the rest of the image

painted directly on the wall. This work *trash team racing* was the first completed in the series of the same name and I was excited with the results.

It was with *trash team racing* work that I began making digital-mock ups of large-scale wall paintings. Although these works were never realised, I was spending more time on the computer using Photoshop. I consider it a time that advanced my skills and confidence in the image manipulation program.

The digital sketch of *trash team racing* was used in a slide projection I installed in the chill-out room of a local dance party. The installation was made up of two images. The first was a line drawing of the girl standing and the other one was of the girl lying back; both images were projected almost from floor to ceiling. At the dance party I talked with a local designer who had some projected animation playing and I felt frustrated at my lack of skill and knowledge of making 'moving images'. If I wanted to animate my bad girls, I had to learn some animation skills. This steered me towards enrolling in a semester unit of 2D animation, which had an enormous impact on my project.

Back to painting though...

During this stage all my preliminary designs were done using Photoshop. I would scan a drawing traced from a photograph and any other material that I could collage together like game interfaces, symbols or words. A number of different compositions were printed for consideration.

The next painting I completed was *but sex is cooler*, featuring a chick on all fours baring her arse while looking over her shoulder at the viewer. In my preliminary designs I began experimenting with cutting off areas of the composition to make an irregular shape. This followed from experiments cutting the aluminium in the previous work *trash team racing*. My interest in making this work was fuelled by a story I heard on the radio about the Wax Museum in London that had just installed a dummy of Kylie Minogue. The

dummy of Kylie is on all fours with her knickers showing and as the viewer comes close she whispers 'I can't get you out of my head'. The wax version of Kylie hit the news because people kept stealing her knickers and exposing her bum!



figure 57: *but sex is cooler* 2002

I was dissatisfied with the surface of *but sex is cooler* as I had a studio with no ceiling and a lot of dust had settled on the drying paint leaving small lumps. (I was also using old enamel paint that tends to solidify after a time.) Again I begin to think about painting, as I had some exciting results from a photo shoot with a friend, who posed with console cords wrapped around her thighs. It was during the photo shoots, that I started taking a series of shots of my friend in movement, for example pointing a gun then concealing it down her pants. Thinking about simple still animation influenced my photo shoots and I wanted to create a sense of movement in other images I was designing.

I began work on *double trouble* a painting using enamel on aluminium. This image introduced a kind of depth using the arrows and for the first time two chicks with guns. I then moved on to *miss fire* extending my desire to catch movement in the figures and featuring game culture motifs like the moving star.



figure 58: *double trouble* 2002



figure 59: *miss fire* 2002

I then went off track; I began relating my work to panel vans with chicks airbrushed on them. I embarked on designing images using imagery from racing games. The chosen final design was made up of two pieces of aluminium with cut out shapes. It was began but never finished.

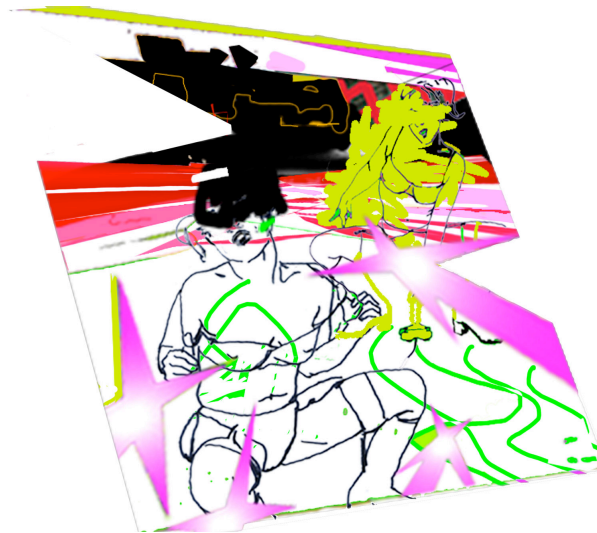
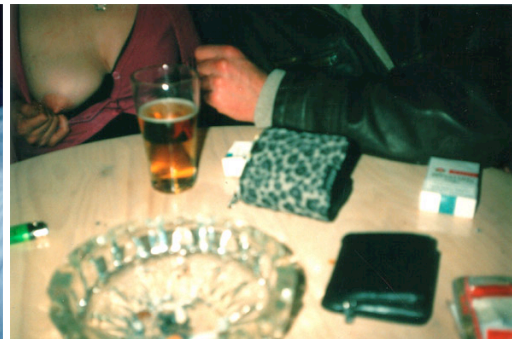


figure 60: *digital sketch* 2002

At this stage I had a meeting with David O'Halloran, who was curating a show based around everyday uses of technology. He asked to see some images of my paintings and I sent him slides of my Honours paintings, along with the catalogue from the show *somewhere between then and now*, featuring my photographs. A couple of months later, while in Melbourne, David gave me a call and asked to get together. He was lively and had some encouraging words to say. Within the discussion he mentioned that I needed to take the paintings to the next level, I wasn't exactly sure what he meant at the time, but it struck a chord with me, mirroring my own frustrations. David decided to show a series of four digital prints of my bad girls as part of the show *ATM* at Glen Eira Gallery, Melbourne.

figure 61: *bra flash* 2003figure 62: *bum flash* 2003figure 63: *hanging in town* 2003figure 64: *boob flash for beer* 2003

On my return from my trip I began scanning my snapshots and printing digitally on the A2 printer at Art School. The process of printing the raunchy photos was enjoyable also a bit of a learning curve when dealing with temperamental printers. I created a series of four images 50 x 65cm.

Phase Two - *half and half* a shift in working methods

I began experimenting by combining the final designs for paintings and the source photographs. I layered the final of *miss fire* over the source image using Photoshop. I then masked the top layer of the colourful design so I could use the rubber tool to erase parts of the image. The masking of the layer enables you to bring back parts of the image you have rubbed out, using the brush tool. I enjoyed rubbing back the solid colours to reveal areas of the source photograph.

I completed two versions of *miss fire* in the *half and half* series; one is of my friend posing in the lounge room with a toy gun down her unzipped pants, with the heater in the background. In this image I have kept elements from the original painting design like the traced outline, stars and gamer icon. I was excited by the clashing elements and the messy dodgy quality. I decided to apply this new collage style to all the paintings completed so far.



figure 65 & 66: half and half (miss fire) digital sketches 2003

The painting *miss fire* had two images of the same girl in different stages of a movement. I decided to use the second image of my friend getting ready to aim the gun. When layering the design over the photograph, I had to make the top layer semi transparent, enabling me to resize and line up the two images so they match. Deliberately, I did not make a perfect match between the two elements thus creating a kind of slippage effect where the reality of the photograph and the fantasy of the illustration never quite match. In the second image of *miss fire* I became bolder, using large sweeping strokes when rubbing out; the flesh of my friend's belly is exposed along with the top part of her arm reaching back onto her head and exposing her lips and nostrils.



figure 67: source photograph 2003



figure 68: half and half (double trouble) digital sketch

Next I began working on using the rubbing back technique with *double trouble*. As before, I layered the two different elements, but I did not line up the traced outline with the figure in the photograph. What I was beginning to enjoy about the rubbing back was the way I could just attack the top layer with the rubber. I would usually do a couple of different versions and then choose the one I

thought worked the best. In double trouble (in the *half and half* series) the girl in the photograph breaks though the middle of the colour design. Again I attacked the top image with the rubber tool, leaving the results of the horizontal marks.

I decided to explore this new technique further and revisit the two paintings that I began earlier: *trash team racing* and *but sex is cooler*. In both images I rubbed back parts of the top design to expose the source photograph. In *but sex is cooler* I liked the fact that you could see the stack of milk crates in the background of the photograph. This image exposes the fishnet stockings with holes and the bare bum of my friend. I felt that I was moving in a new direction, away from the illustrative type imagery which had become quite slick in its finish.



figure 69: half and half digital sketch 2003



figure 70: half and half digital sketch 2003

After I had finished the *half and half* series I began to have some doubts about what step to take next. I did have some issues with the works in the *half and half* series and became unsure about the clashing styles layered together. I was excited by the new working methods but the digital prints were put away in a drawer in my studio and did not come out again till a couple of months later. Retrospectively, the technique of layering and rubbing back developed within the *half and half* series has been a major influence on the construction of the works in my final series.

Phase Three - *homegroan girls*

This is the final stage of my project and I feel it marks the consequence of the previous experiments and frustrations that have led to the significant shifts within my project. It was at this time that I began to get new and stimulating results that expressed my interest in weaving in and out of topics like photography, pop art, web culture, soft porn and contemporary culture. I will discuss the making of the works along with some of the motivation and thoughts that occurred during the final phase of my project.



figure 71 night the cops turned up photo shoot

Over the 2002 summer holidays, a friend came and stayed with me. We organized a photo shoot; it was a fun affair, involving my neighbour and his car. The first half of the photo shoot was inspired by an afternoon watching dodgy porno videos with some friends. One had particularly affected me where the producer/actor kept asking the girls to dribble; they didn't look too impressed. I wanted to do a series of photos of my friend dribbling milk. It was this photo shoot of my friend dribbling milk and the second half of the shoot, which was a more free form affair, involving my neighbour and his car, which played a major role in the initial stage of Phase Three.

2D animation

In semester 1 of 2003 I enrolled in a 2D animation unit within the E-Media department. I was very excited with the possibilities of animating still images along with video footage taken of my friends. In class we discussed the rates of still frames per second that make a moving image, the reasons for storyboarding, various styles like the loop, sound effects and visual genres. The course was based around the computer program After Effects and each week the lecturer went over the basic processes within the program. The first project was based on working with still images, as an introduction into the computer program. For the second project you could use any type of components.

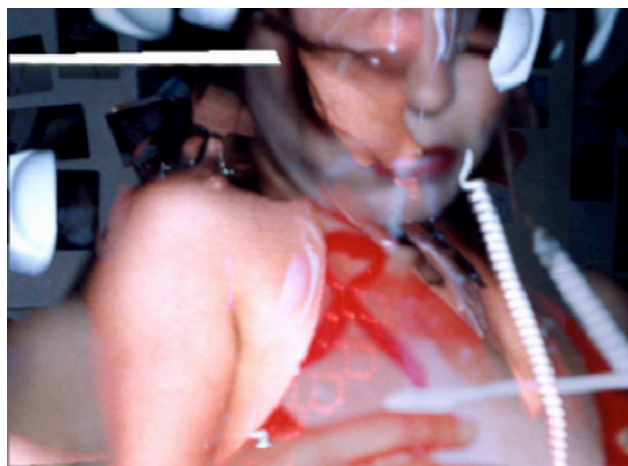


figure 72: dribble girl experiments, animation still, 2003
see Appendix 5 for animation

The first couple of experiments done were like a slide show of photographs of my friend dribbling milk. During these testers I learned how to import images, edit, crop, create a timeline and export as QuickTime movies. The series of experiments were short in length, ranging from 5 to 30 sec. This allowed me to work quickly and not wait forever for the program to render large files! I also began recording my friend playing electronic keyboards and singing, as I wanted to introduce sound as an element.

It was during this first project that I was introduced to the technique of making a filmstrip from still images, for example a 30 sec long grab at 25 frames per second would make 750 still frames. In After Effects I was able to export the filmstrip and edit each frame in Photoshop. This technique created a large image file and I learnt that it was only possible to edit a small section, like 5 sec of the filmstrip, at a time. This was a very time-consuming process and complex, especially when learning. However, through experimentation within the first project, I was making headway. I became more familiar with the program After Effects and others like Quick Time Pro and Imovie used for importing footage and sound.

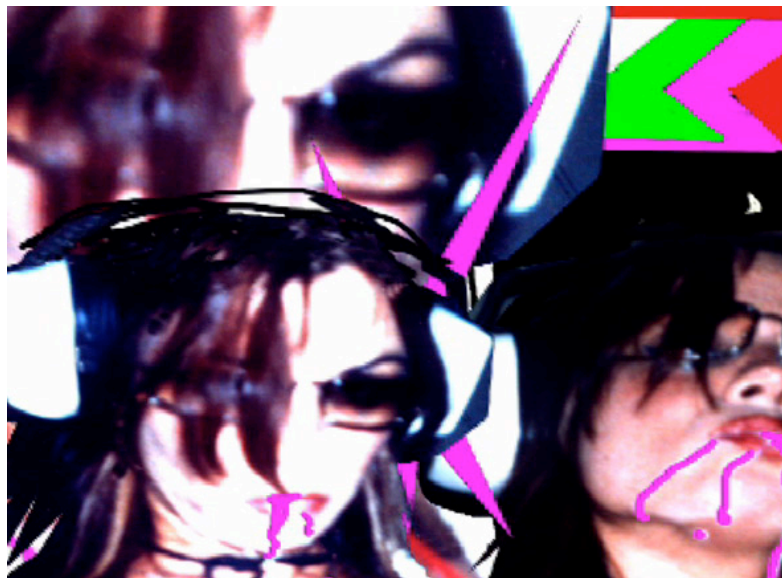


figure 73: dribble girl experiments, animation still, 2003
see Appendix 5 for animation

For the second and final project I decided to incorporate loop, sound, video footage and the filmstrip technique. I still wanted to develop the dribble girl idea, so I organized a photo shoot with a friend of mine. I took short video takes of her in my lounge room, dribbling milk down her chest and rubbing it around her breasts. The results were great and I became very excited about using the video camera. From my previous experiments I decided the best option would be to edit the straight footage and apply the filmstrip technique section by section. During editing I began to reverse sections of film to enhance the feeling of the loop of the girl dribbling. When I was happy with the editing I then exported a single film still to use as an experiment in Photoshop. I chose a still that had all the elements of milk dribbling, as I wanted to make sure that I did not lose any of the detail. Using Photoshop I began a couple of experiments with colour, contrast and the cut-out filter. Using the single still I came up with a combination using *levels*, (to brighten the straight footage) and *brightness and contrast* (to change the tone of the real footage to purple). Once happy with the bright colour style I began to push ahead again using the *hue and saturation* filter keying up the colour even further. When stage one was finished I had the edited loop and a template of the effects to layer over it.

I realized that although the edited loop was about 50 sec, it was made up of the two sections of 5 secs. It made my job simpler as I only had to work with two 5 sec of filmstrip. The files for a 5 sec filmstrip are about 200mb, which I found to be the limit when working with them in Photoshop. A large file like this takes a couple of minutes to open up in Photoshop, and to apply an effect to the stills; so I began using the effects with the edited loop. Once finished I imported the film still into After Effects and completed the loop by adding some sound made for the animation by my partner Mat Ward. The sound was made using electronic keyboards because I wanted an electro sound weaved in with the loop of the girl. The last element was a cut-out layer of a tracing of a still placed over the top of the moving footage, screening out the face of my friend, while still allowing her body and movements to be seen. The identity of my

friends is something that I began to consider and as I developed my project I began to realize that the works, while they feature my friends, are not portraits of them. The works are more about the position of females and the ways we play with female sexual stereotypes in daily life. The final work is on DVD format and I saw it presented as a large data projection. The animation *dribble girl in loungeroom* is a continual loop mirroring the action of the girl dribbling milk and sucking it back up while repetitively rubbing her boobs. The work takes the viewer to the edge and then drags then back over and over, mirroring the effect of soft porn.

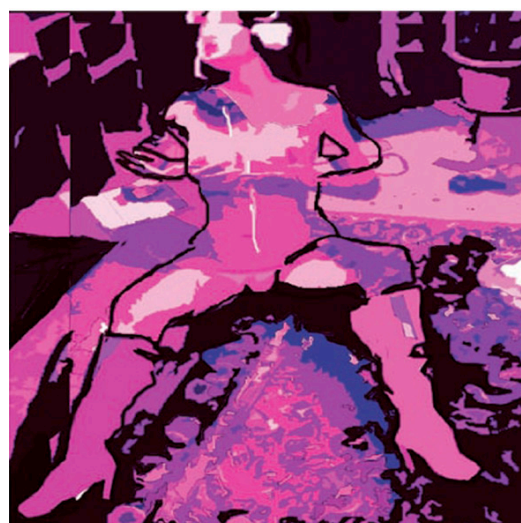


figure 74: *dribble girl in loungeroom* still 2003
see Appendix 5 for animation

The first series of digital cut out works

While working through the animation unit I began to clarify the wide parameters I had set myself at the beginning of the project. I looked over the material and images I had collected so far and saw links between websites I had been looking at like digitalgirly.com, the amateur bandit girls featured in bikini bandits.com and the images I had taken of my friends. Previously I had a problem when anyone mentioned the words bad girls; I felt it was a dated concept and too 'simple' and I had been using terms like 'girls with attitude' to focus my investigation. Through the impact of reading particular texts I was beginning to grasp the power of the popular term 'bad girls' and 'the everyday'. I felt the frustrations I was having with painting was somehow related to the

fact that the surroundings in the photographs had been deleted. I began thinking seriously about the photo shoots with my friends as ordinary bad girls and the resulting images.

The show I had organized with Kylie Johnson was looming and we got together to discuss the works we had in mind to develop. I brought along the dribble girl animation, a folder with photocopies of recent photos, and the last lot of painting designs based on the dribble girl shoot. At the beginning we talked about the proposed paintings and Kylie reflected on my doubts. We discussed the fact that the designs for paintings and the paintings themselves had become too slick and were no different to a lot of current illustration in magazines; whereas the photocopies of photos and animation work had an edge to them that reflected the dodgy quality within the photos. It was suggested that I show digital prints of the black and white photocopies. I had to abandon my practice of designing and painting with enamels and this was a scary thought, though liberating! I was seriously confused at this point about where to take my painting work. I began scanning the black and white photocopies I had made of the photographs and I was now planning large scale digital prints pinned to the wall. A mock up of the CAST gallery was made to help decide the scale of the works.

It was at this point that I revisited the earlier work *half and half*, filed away in my studio. Something clicked and I began to think why don't I combine the different elements of the photograph and traced outline with solid colour with the dribble girl photos? I began working on designs and was excited by the possibilities of rubbing back the outline pop design to reveal details of photographic image like fish-net stockings and the surroundings. The designs in this style worked well and I decided to find materials and make a work that would allow me to mirror the digital layering effect. I made a small tester using an A3 digital print with a sheet of acetate placed over it. Previously I had seen a student up in the painting studios using coloured vinyl, I asked him where he

got it, as I thought it would be perfect to use for the coloured layer of the design, when hand cut to shape. In the tester I constructed, I saw possibilities; next I tried to figure out how to make them to the size I wanted. The next couple of weeks I spent getting digital printing quotes from various printing shops and trying to find a material similar to the small acetate sheet but in a large format.

Pop bandit

The next design I decided to make was *pop bandit*, I had a large digital print made and I found some lightweight plastic from a fabric store. I decided to pin the plastic over the digital print to act as a glossy clear layer, and to then add the coloured layer using hand cut coloured vinyl. I used an overhead projector to project the coloured layer onto the image and traced the required shapes using tracing paper. Using the template I then cut the coloured vinyl (similar to contact with the underside sticky) and then stuck it on the clear plastic.



figure75 : *pop bandit* 2003

When I began work in my studio, problems arose with the plastic as it was too flimsy and created a lot of air bubbles under the coloured contact. I found a material called polycarbonate clear plastic that comes in large sheets 120 x 400cm and is about 5 mm thick. The material is perfect as it can be pinned over the digital print and is quite manageable. As I was finishing *pop bandit*, I designed 4 other works to be made using the same techniques.

Dribble girl in kitchen – completed but unresolved, then destroyed

I then went back to the first tester I had made in this series. I started work but was never totally happy with it. I ended up cutting up the plastic layer and using it at a later date.



figure 76 & 77: dribble girl in kitchen digital sketches 2003

Wired for sound

Next I made *wired for sound*, larger in scale than *pop bandit*, and at this stage I was becoming more confident in designing the working image and I began to cut and paste objects in the photographic layer, for example I added the

Coolabah wine box in this image. I was also getting more skilled in cutting and layering the coloured contact on the clear plastic sheet.



figure 78: *wired for sound* 2003

Night the cops turned up 1 and 2

There were restrictions placed upon the size of the digital prints I could get made, the maximum width being 120cm. I decided to make them as large as possible and it was a scale I have continued to work with. I wanted the girls featured in the works to be larger than life size to have some impact on the viewer. I also found on reflection that combining the contrasting layers of the source photograph along with the coloured design alluded to the trashy and sexy nature of the photo shoot along with the pop attitude.



Figure 79: *night cops turned up 2* 2003



Figure 80: *night cops turned up 1* 2003

***Everyday entertainment* exhibition**

The five digital vinyl cut-out works were exhibited along with the *dribble girl in lounge room* animation at CAST gallery in September 2003. The show was called *everyday entertainment* and also featured works by Kylie Johnson. A catalogue was produced and the show also toured to Gallery Wren, an artist run space in Sydney, in November 03. I gained a lot of insight hanging and exhibiting my works at the CAST show. It also marked the first time I had shown an animation piece with sound. The gallery space of CAST is like a large rectangle box. We installed a fifth wall on the right hand side just as you enter the space. The dark area behind the fake wall was used for the projection of the animation, which also helped to hinder some of the sound component from intruding through the other space. The two works *night the cops turned up 1 & 2* were pinned to the far left wall. The other three works were pinned on the left sidewall as you enter.

First presentation

I was very pleased with the nature of the imagery in viewing the series of new works shown in *everyday entertainment*. I felt that I was getting an interesting combination of the everyday bad girl in her dodgy surroundings and the soft

porn aesthetic. At this time I had my first crit presentation and, in preparing I had a meeting with my supervisor. We discussed the shifts that had occurred within the new digital vinyl cut out works and animation. In relation to the look of my new series of works he suggested revisiting Allen Jones and Andy Warhol. It was at this time I looked closely at Andy Warhol's series, *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'*, that combined the photographic image with pop colour and line. I also began looking at some mix media works of Australian artist Ken Reinhard and his collage use of page-three type chicks in everyday banal settings. My supervisor suggested that I review my research proposal so it reflected my current progress. My original title was *Ladytron*, reflecting my interest in cyber culture, I changed it to *home grown glamour girls*. At the time I felt this title reflected how I was visually investigating female sexual stereotypes in popular culture. I wanted to discuss the relationships I have seen between soft porn websites that feature everyday chicks and the photo shoots I take of my friends being bad around the house. Within the context of research I talked about the influences of websites like pornocombo.com that feature sexy illustrations and animations. Also at the crit I presented slides of the last two paintings completed *miss fire* and *double trouble, half and half* series and the new digital vinyl cut out works alongside the animation. In doing this I wanted to give an indication visually of the progress I had made to date.

First presentation of paper written in relation to exegesis

After my show at CAST and my crit I began concentrating on researching and writing a paper to deliver at my next presentation. I had decided to explore my interest in snap shot photography. This direction towards photography was inspired by the attraction I had developed for a particular image by Wolfgang Tillmans called *Rachael Auburn and son* (1995). This image for me had all the elements that I was exploring within my own work; the everyday setting with electronic stuff piled up in the background and a women acting up and posing provocatively in a black bikini wearing headphones around her neck. (The

headphones featured in Tillmans' image inspired me to include a set of headphones in my own photo shoots). What also intrigued me about this image was it featured her son hugging the woman around her hips (which for me added a type of spontaneity within the bad girl domain). I felt an affinity with my own photographs of my mates acting bad in the way Tillmans talked about his own photographs of friends who are 'labelled as a part of a generalized "youth culture" and tend to be presented as something transitory and playful, something which will be straightened out at a later date'. He said 'what I am interested in is precisely that it's not a phase. So what I am really doing is looking for people who have a similar approach to life - who take seriously what is normally dismissed as a phase and become comfortable with it'.⁶¹

Everyday entertainment at Gallery Wren Sydney

When Kylie Johnson and I took our show *Everyday entertainment* up to Sydney, I decided to use this opportunity to reconfigure the hanging of my works. The feedback I had received from the CAST show was that the works were swamped in the large space. In discussion we decided that, as Gallery Wren space was three sides of a long rectangle, I would use the middle wall and Kylie the two sides. This gave me a chance to do some experiments with installing and I set up a wall at home using the same dimensions as the gallery in Sydney. I decided to collage together 4 works that would fill the whole area of the wall.



Figure 81 installation shot 2003

⁶¹ Verwoert, J, *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Phaidon, 2002, p 124

Tues night band practice 1 & 2

The designs for these two works were developed using video stills rather than photographs, it happened by accident as the rolls of film I had used during this particular shoot were misplaced. The footage was taken during a photo shoot with a friend, set in the band room of my house. My partner plays in a band so there were heaps of guitars, amps and electric cords lying around. We had fun with my friend donning the right sort of clothing for a rock chick, electric blue skin-tight pants and a sheer top.

When I began looking through the footage to pick the best frame to work from, I was looking for two things. I wanted to make sure the images were as clear as possible with no fuzzy edges (due to movement) and had the right combination of provocativeness and dodgy surroundings. At the time I was unsure if I used a video still (which is at a low resolution), how it would handle being blown up to a large scale around 120 x 160cm. I discussed my fears with a friend who said that my work wasn't about using crisp images and it would suit the imagery if the print was pixelated.



figure 82: tues night band practice 1 2004

In the two designs for *Tues night band practice 1 & 2*, I decided to treat the colour image, as I had previously done in the animation work in Photoshop, by bumping up the colour saturation and changing the tone of the image. This marks the first use of a colour digital print in the digital cut out works. The still was in shades of blue and pink and the colour overlay was made up of a line tracing and solid colours of pink, green, red and black. As before, I layered the two images in Photoshop and began the rubbing back process. This is one of my favourite steps within the image design process, a pretty liberating affair, involving lots of rubbing back using the rubber tool. It is a similar feeling to scribbling across an image, but in this process you reveal the under-image. It was in these images that I began to take note of some of the elements that I thought were interesting, like the bold strokes of the rubber tool. These strokes exposed the real image, while leaving a trace of its movement within the solid colour areas that were untouched.

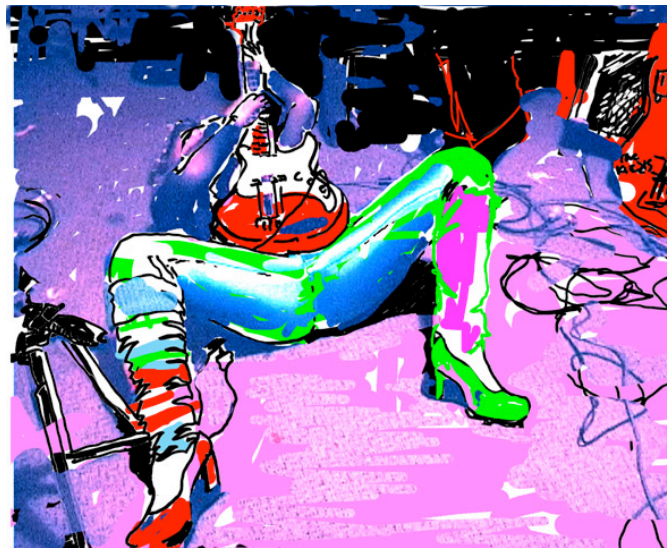


figure 83: tues night band practice 2 2004

Another layer of bright colour on the digital print was introduced within these images. This idea had been discussed by my supervisor and myself when viewing my previous images in *everyday entertainment*. We talked about how

using the solid colour lines on the bottom photographic layer would create more of a shifting quality between the two separate layers. This was done in the design either by copying a selection from the top layer of bright colour and pasting it onto the photographic image or drawing directly into the image with the pen tool in Photoshop. I would then use this as the template for digital printing. I left a lot of the pink vinyl in the original design of the lower right hand side of the final image, as I liked all the cords on the carpet coming through. I stayed faithful to the line and shapes of colour in the design for elements like the boots of the girl, and her legs.

Night the cops turned up 3

Once more when designing this work I added colour lines and shapes that complemented the top layer. In the colour design layer I took some of the pink line running through the figure and transferred it onto the photographic layer thus when making the final work the vinyl layer had a gap and the colour came from below. In this work, while adding the colour strokes in the photographic layer I also manipulated that layer by doubling up the girls face.



figure 84: *night cops turned up 3* 2004

Suburban edge

The works made for *Suburban Edge* roll up and can be transported easily in plumbing tube. The works were sent up to Sydney along with a DVD of the animation for the show at ACP, opening in March 2004. There were a couple of events organized for the show like the opening, artist talks and dinner. Opening night was the first time I had seen the works hung and I was very pleased. The vinyl works had never looked so good in the previous shows due to the variation of scale, layout, etc. As you walked into the gallery, on the left was an area with chocolate coloured walls, that had my work and artist David Lehman's images of hand beaded nipples. On the left wall were the two works *Tues night band practice 1 & 2*. On the middle wall were the three *night the cops turned up 1, 2 & 3* images. On the third wall was the projection of the animation, set on a white board, in similar proportions to the vinyl cut out works with sound available though a set of headphones. The works were pinned onto the dark walls and each one had a single light that brought out the vividness of the colours. As the lights hit the plastic sheet it caused a rippling effect on the polished concrete floors.



figure 85: installation shot of *Suburban Edge* 2004

The opening night of Suburban Edge was a crazy affair, on the invite it asked that you dress like from 'the burbs'. I met some of the other artists in the show like Bronwyn Wright and Lee-Ann Richards who was running around in a wedding dress. Bronwyn Wright and I held an impromptu photo shoot with a girl from Queensland wearing some great red skimpy vinyl shorts posing in front of my works. Even Tracey Emin was there (she was in town for her solo show at Roslyn Oxley Gallery). I didn't see her, but apparently she gave one of the artists a bit of flack because her work was too much like that of Tracey's good friend Gillian Wearing!

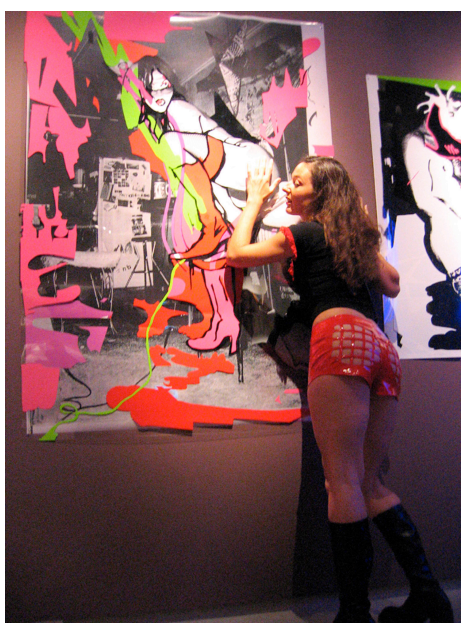


figure 86: *Suburban Edge* opening night 2004

The next day all the artists met at the gallery to go through the works in the show as a sort of practice run for the floor talks being held the next day. We all went out for dinner later that night and discussed things like survival as an artist and also our own artistic interests. I got some great feedback concerning my work and new possibilities to consider for the future. Looking back over those couple of days hanging out with the other artists and making a total balls-up of my first ever artist floor talk, I learnt a lot. This experience not only benefited my professional practice but also was an opportunity to site my own research themes and work at a national level.

Back to old Hobart town

In preparing for my second presentation crit I felt it would be a good opportunity to revise again my research proposal. The recent achievements made within my project required reflection about my concerns. I began using the terms 'ordinary girl' along with 'bad girl' to encapsulate my visual investigation. I felt it necessary to reflect the significance my project placed on the new breed of bad girl on the Internet. The reworked title became *homegroan girls; a visual investigation into the bad girl stereotype in popular website culture*.

A series of visual strategies had developed through making works; things like titles for work, making a sequence of works on the one theme and the scale became important features to consider when designing new images. Reflecting on previous images I began to realise that the way I was titling the works implied the personal nature of the photo shoot. However the titles were also important as strategic devices to suggest the attitudes of the women taking saucy photographs of themselves and posting them on the web. Employing a type of titillation within the title was tempting the viewer to enter the fantasy world.

At this time I also began to consider my use of collage on a pictorial level along with the conceptional level, and how it lends itself to a new type of imagery. I felt that my project takes its heritage and motivation from traditional forms like pop artist Andy Warhol, bad girl artists like Tracey Emin, and photographer Nan Goldin. At the same time, crossing through areas of contemporary media like websites, animation and pop videos and soft porn photography; enabling me to weave in and out of the digital arena and the more conventional gallery space.

More photo shoots

I began working on some new designs for vinyl cut-out works and animations based on a new photo shoot I had done with a friend. The premise for the shoot was to explore other settings within my house like the bedroom and kitchen. I was also eager to take some video footage using a tripod in a well-lit environment. We had worked out a rough kind of plan involving my friend dancing around the lounge room with a bloke lying back on the couch. The other scene was of my friend dragging a stocking headed bloke, by a Playstation gun cord around his neck, into the lounge room where another friend was lying back on the couch. During the previous weeks I make notes and quick sketches of particular poses, props or settings. During the shoot original ideas are elaborated on and all sorts of things can transpire on the night!



figure 87: *coming home for that special dinner 1* 2004

Coming home for that special dinner 1 & 2

These works were made using photographs taken of a friend in the kitchen, naked except for the skimpiest of undies, suspender sheer stockings and knee high black boots. During the shoot she ran through a series of everyday

activities like walking in with shopping bags and opening up the oven. Both images that I chose to develop had elements of dodgy surroundings like a fridge covered in stickers and magnets or posters and photos collaged onto a door. Within both these works I used reflective vinyl for the white lines on the figure, which reflected in my studio with the light of the overhead projector. However, when I installed them in a gallery setting I realized the reflective tape doesn't perform nearly as well without direct lighting.



figure 88: *coming home for that special dinner 2* 2004

Developing the homegroan girls website

In Semester 2 of 2004 I undertook a unit of web design. I wanted to learn the basics of developing and designing a website with the idea to make one as part of my project. This idea has always been considered as an option and again, as with animation, I needed to acquire the necessary skills. As part of my Honours project I developed a zine magazine to present my paper. A graphic designer friend of mine, Chris Norman, did the layout of the magazine that layered images of interest to my project and actual working designs and the finished works. When I began my MFA project I had discussions with my supervisor about exploring further the zine idea and the possibility of making a

website. Early on in the project I also talked with a friend, a bit of a hard core computer artist who said there's a lot of dodgy sites out there and you need to be careful. At the time she curbed my enthusiasm! However as I became more confident using high-end animation programs I realized that even though making a website would be a lot of work, I could handle it. I also recognized that I did not want to make a website that worked as a folio. I wanted to make one that would work as a platform that would link my animations, photos and digital vinyl works. In the months leading up to starting the course, I continued developing testers of animations suitable for the web and even began designing and considering page design layouts for my website.

Links, logos and hotspots

I started to investigate the components that made up other websites of interest. For instance a logo features quite heavily in most sites along with animations with sound. Designing a website is a very time-consuming process and needs a high level of planning beforehand, so I began to learn the particulars of page design and navigation approaches within a site. I also learnt how to link pages together with hotspots, links and rollovers using programs like Dreamweaver MX and Fireworks MX. Next I learnt how to embed QuickTime movies and flash animation into a web page. I made a series of test homepages that explored page design, titles, moving image and sound. In doing these small testers I began to familiarize myself with the computer software and to map out the possible construction and appearance of my site.

I decided to base the site on a virtual tour of my house and the photo shoots that happen within the rooms. The map of my site begins with a home page that works as an introduction to the content within. The image is of *coming home for that special dinner 1*, it flashes between layers of the design using the photograph and the final design combining the illustration and photo. I designed various versions of my logo till I came up with one that I felt was

successful. The final logo used hand written text and a little drawing of a house surrounded by tetxa scribbles.



figure 89: homegroan girls title page



The title page links to the main source page, *housemap*, which has links to all the content pages in the site. The page was constructed using a hand drawn map of my house and the rooms like kitchen, bedroom, lounge room, computer room and band room. Each outline of the room had the typed name (like kitchen) that acts as a drop down menu featuring the tiles of pages linked to that room. The *housemap* page has the map on the left and an image of a friend sitting on the lounge with a champagne bottle between her legs. To the right of the girl are links to my email address, an about page, and links to other websites of interest. The content of the drop down menus, relating to each room, was added a couple of months later after designing and finishing the featured animations and photos. The following pages offer a description of each room and its content.



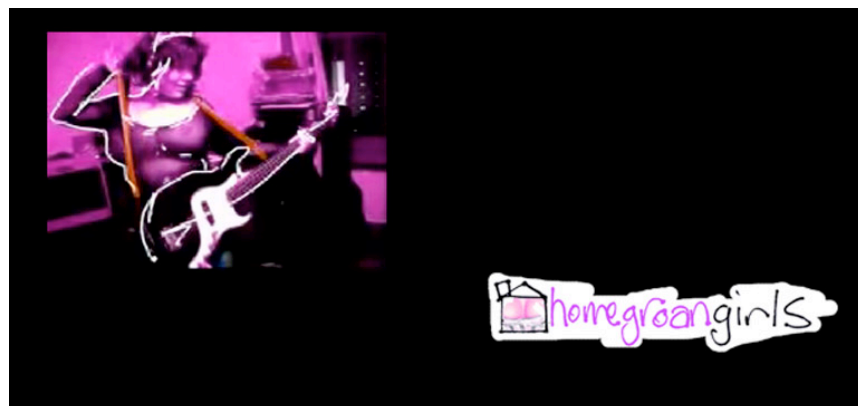
figure 90: house map page

Bandroom

The bandroom menu has two pages linked to it. The first page is called *tues night band practice*, it shows images of the two vinyl cut out works of the same name. The second page features a QuickTime animation called *rock star*, it is a 30sec loop of my friend posing and playing guitar. Throughout the movie she suggestively passes the strap of the guitar over her head and brushes the top of the guitar over her nipple.



figure 91: band room web grabs



Loungeroom

This menu offers a link to a page called *after dinner drink drinks*. This page features an animation again like *rock star* using line drawing, frame by frame. The footage used is of a girlfriend walking in and out of the lounge room dragging a male friend with a stocking over his head by a cord around his neck. As the camera pans across the room following the girl, you notice, lying on the couch, the lower half of a bloke crossing and uncrossing his legs, caught up in the loop. The soundtrack is made using the live sound recorded during the shoot and some sampling. If you listen closely you can hear my friend say 'Tiff are you actually filming this part?' and the bloke being dragged saying 'you look quite nice from this angle' adding to the layering placed upon the visual effects. The sound is also subjected to the same technique of reversing the direction of the film, so when the girl is walking backwards the sound echoes her. The second page linked to *loungeroom* is called *after band practice photo shoot*. It features a series of video stills of my friend exposing her boobs.

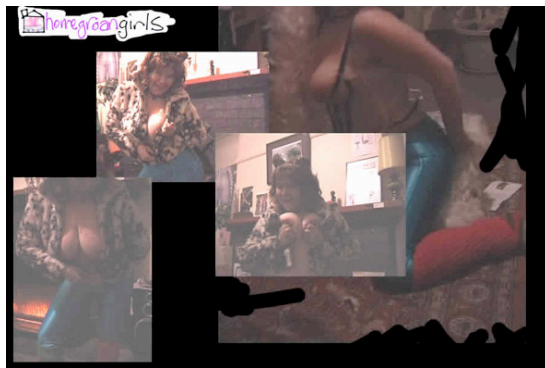
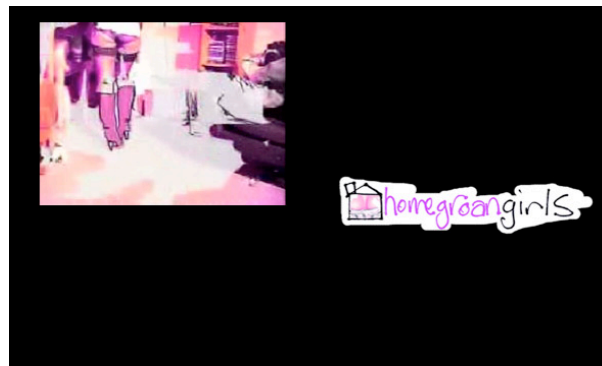


figure 92: lounge room web grabs



computerroom

The drop down menu for this room is a page called *relaxing after a hard nights work*. This page is made using a series of photographs of my friends relaxing after 'working' on the computer. These photographs also relate the series of two digital cut out works I have made using the same title. In this page the viewer runs the mouse over the numbers between 1 and 12 that are linked below to a series of photographs.



figure 93: relaxing after hard nights work web grab

bedroom

This links to a page called *play fight* that features a Flash movie made using digital photographs of a friend and myself play fighting with bright pink dildos with pink and red pen scribbles flying across the photographs. The other link is to a page with a series of photographs called xmas hand cuffs.

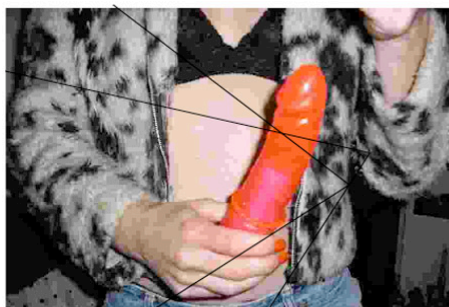


figure 94: play fight still



figure 95: xmas hand cuffs web grab

Kitchen

This menu links to a page called ***trashed morning cuppa*** which is a Flash movie comprised of still photographs and hand drawn outlines of a friend making cups of tea while smoking a ciggie.



figure 96: trashed morning cuppa still

See more link

This links to a page called homegroan undies, which is a Flash movie, made up of a series of photographs of a friend wearing screen-printed undies featuring the homegroan girls logo. The idea behind screen printing the logo on undies was inspired by sites like suicide girls who feature photo shoots of the suicide girls wearing their own brand logo undies.

The website *homegroan girls.com* and the featured animations, sounds and images allow the observer to enter the fantasy via the web. The virtual tour of the house through the designated rooms and the related works allows the viewer to interact within the fantasy space itself.

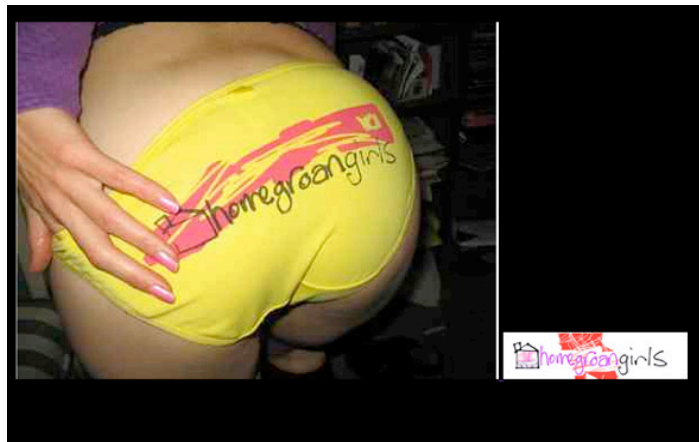


figure 97: homegroan undies still

Calender girl

For this work I took 12 stills, from the series of video footage of my friend walking into the lounge room, dragging a bloke (with a stocking over his head), by a Playstation cord. Some of the other footage of this shoot had been used previously in *after dinner drink drinks*. I have been working with this particular piece of footage for a while and it has never been fully resolved as a moving image piece. While working on the project I began to get excited by the effect of layering the black outline on white over the pink hue, using the rubbing back technique. Running your eyes across all 12 images you pick up the sequence of movement similar to a flipbook or web cam footage that slowly downloads

frame by frame. I decided to print these images in a small scale and pin them close to each other, emphasizing the linear progression of the original source material. *The calendar girl* work is a series of digital prints that employs the idea of animation using stills taken from video footage that has not been seen, so you can only assume by the chosen images which events really took place.



figure 98: *Calendar girl* 2005

2 dollar champagne night - aftermath

One night I went out with some mates, with my digital camera in tow, to a Salamanca club that had 2-dollar glasses of 'champagne', so we settled in for the evening. Early in the night when I went to the toilets, I discovered the crusty old toilets had been renovated, using black tiles, and it was very swish. I thought to myself I have to take photos in there. I ran back to my mates and told them about my discovery. We ended up spending most of the night in the toilet cubical, taking photos, drinking cheap champagne and smoking.

I took about 120 images that night, using a newly acquired digital camera. Until this time I had been using my blue instamatic camera and borrowing friends digital cameras. The freedom to take up to about 140 photos is liberating, seeing results immediately.

When viewing the results from the photo shoot I realized that some of the particular shots were beauties and I decided to print out the selected images. A

couple of months later I revisited the images and saw some possibility for a work, using digital prints of the straight photographs. I didn't feel it was necessary to digitally treat the images with the rubbing back technique. I felt there was enough chaos of flesh and colour, in dodgy surroundings to convey an aesthetic that reflected my artistic concerns. However, I was unsure of the final configuration. In consultation with my supervisor, I came up with the idea of presenting the works in a contained space. Using three gallery walls, I created a template and began playing around with the layout of the images. I wanted the arrangement to enhance the feeling of disarray, so I began to turn some of the images upside down. The end result is the work *2 dollar champagne night - aftermath* consisting of 12 digital prints at A1 size. The configuration of this work has been designed keeping in mind of the final submission exhibition in the Plimsoll Gallery. This allows for a gap to be present between two walls where the viewer can peep into the space. However, to enter the space the viewer has to walk around and down the outside of the walls.

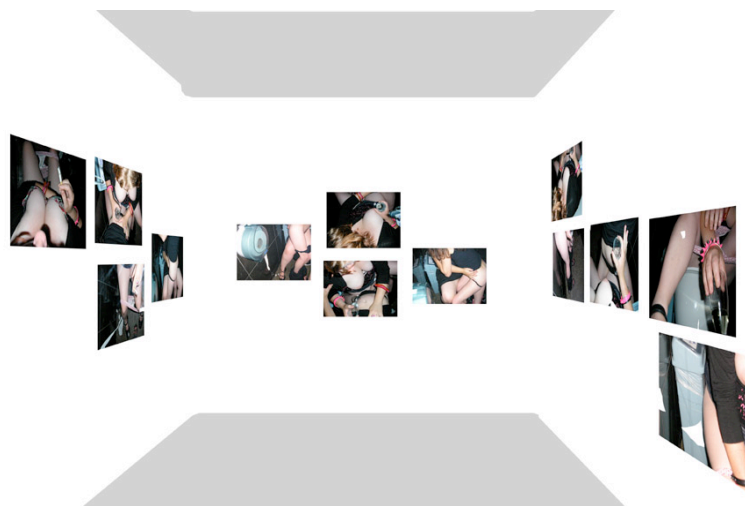


figure 99: *2 dollar champagne night – aftermath* 2005

2 dollar champagne night – aftermath is an installation made up using the gallery walls and digital prints. In this work, the viewer within the gallery space experiences a peek at the possibility of a little titillation, to be fully satiated the

viewer must enter by the 'back door'. In all these works I have employed collage as a visual strategy that is also carried across in the materials and techniques I have chosen to layer within the construction.

Relaxing after a hard nights work 1 & 2

These works are the final digital cut-out works made for my project and I consider them to represent all the concerns of my project. The first work *Relaxing after a hard nights work 1* was conceived and designed during the making of the *homegroan girls* website. It was a time when I was taking photographs of my friends in my computer room. The photo shoots grew out of sessions a friend and I have, occasionally, where she comes over to my place with her laptop to hook up with mine to swap music and programs. The photos from these sessions, illustrate perfectly the concepts of girls interacting with digital technology and the web porn fantasy central to my investigation. I feel these two digital cut-out works combine the construction of the bad girl image along with the porn fantasy itself. The design of these works has built upon earlier works where I began the layering process on the photograph. In these works I have employed more than one photo in the construction of the photographic layer.

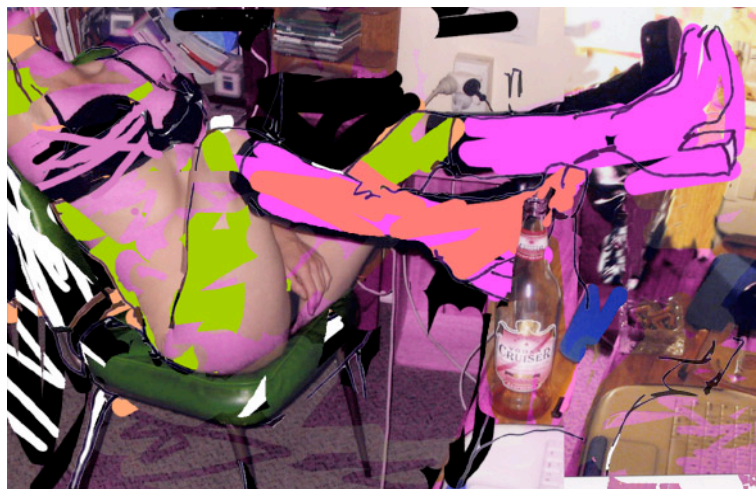


figure 100: *relaxing after hard night work* 2005



figure 101: *relaxing after hard nights work* 2005

Homegroan girls, the final submission

My final submission consists of the most resolved works, within my investigation into the new breed of bad girl and their relationship to digital technology. The works themselves are a crossbreed of old and new techniques that range from painting, drawing, photography, animation and web design. The variety of media used reflects the multiple ways contemporary women living in the suburbs, are accessing, exploring and manipulating concepts of female sexuality, stereotypes and digital culture.

Part Four: Conclusion

During the initial stage of my project I identified popular culture, the porno aesthetic and the 'bad girl' stereotype as key areas for investigation. I was intrigued by the fact that women could take control of their own sexual image through examination and subversion of concepts like the bad girl and other cultural ideas that have traditionally carried negative connotations (the slut, the princess, the gold digger, the stripper and the porn star)

My study has revealed a realm of self-discovery available for women via the application of digital technology. The appropriation and subversion of accepted sexual norms and the self-directed use of technology has given women access to a form of communication that I feel empowers, beautifies and authentically represents female sexuality.

The investigation of artists like Annie Sprinkle, Madonna and Tracey Emin and the writings of new media and pornography theorists like Kath Albury and Barbara Creed have been vital to my understanding of the representation of the sexual image.

Fetish photographers like Eric Kroll and Elmer Batters, as well as lifestyle/snapshot photographers Nan Goldin and Wolfgang Tillmans, have directly influenced and inspired my project. Popular forms of media like the websites pornocombo.com and suicide girls.com have also been vital in the construction of my undertaking.

Through my work, starting at *trash team racing* and going right through to my website *homegroangirls.com*, I feel I have made a contribution to the field. Each stage has evolved and built on previous undertakings, refining my concerns during the process. My 'models', just like the girls on the Internet, are ordinary women. Through my work they have engaged in play, fantasy and

expression that reflects a new trend towards media savvy, non-professional, autobiographical displays of sexuality.

Over the three and half year period of my visual investigation aspects of modern sexuality and self expression that I had not originally figured fitted into my proposal began to reveal themselves. Critically, my exploration of the Internet led me to a more comprehensive study of the role of self-publication and self-celebrity. This topic has, I believe become the prominent feature of my investigation, reflecting the ordinary girl's methods of exploring sexuality in a contemporary environment.

The shift occurred through web surfing when I came across girls on the Internet posting photographs of themselves acting like 'bad girls'. These home made porn stars are accessing digital technologies like the Internet and cameras for their own gains and enjoyment and participating in a new form of self-celebrity. It was at this time I began connecting with the 'boob exploit' celebrities like Jordon and moving further away from my earlier interests in the highly polished sexy but safe stars like Kylie and Madonna.

The third and final stage of my investigation *homegroan girls* marks the point where I began to develop the exciting connections between the growing fascination in popular culture of the non celebrity being famous represented in the rising popularity of websites devoted to ordinary girls hamming it up for the amateur photographer.

These girls act up and perform for and with the camera in full knowledge their exploits may be consumed by an anonymous audience. This knowledge impacts on the nature of their activities and sets up a space where the privacy of the domestic area becomes a public platform for self-directed temporary stardom.

I drew artists into my project like Andy Warhol and Nan Goldin because their work offered evidence of a past that supported the tradition of artists exploiting

and acting out scenes of their trashy lifestyles using their friends as models to portray their own particular view of their world.

While resolving my final submission, *homegroan girls*, my interest in the Internet and digital media developed along two particular lines of enquiry. I wanted to develop works that not only explored pictorially women playing and using digital technologies around the house, but also develop works for the digital arena its self, like the Internet.

I developed a series of twelve digital cut out works that explored the look of the ordinary bad girl posing in her own post modern, digital environment. In these works I layered on top of one another the snapshot and the pop style illustration. I rubbed out areas of the top pop layer to reveal the everyday surroundings. From the *night the cops turned up 1,2 & 3* to *coming home for that special dinner 1 & 2* I explored the provocative antics women get up around the house. The last two works *relaxing after a hard nights work 1 & 2* explore the look of digital porn star working from home. For me these last two images in the digital cut out series convey the connections between digital culture and the self-created celebrity status of these web girls.

The animation *dribble girl in lounge room* marks my foray into the realm of digital time based media which would lead itself to the development of my website. *homegroan girls.com*, is a virtual tour of my house that explores the concept of self-celebrity by broadcasting on the web images and animations that capture ideas of the home photo and video shoot/event itself.

During the course of my project I touch on the idea of self-celebrity through out my discussion of my subject matter and context. However, at the time I perhaps hadn't grasped its importance to my investigation. I feel in hindsight that if I had been more rigorous in my contextual approach within the final leg of *homegroan girls* I would have been able to steer my project beyond the

bad girl constructs and fully realise the potential of the self-celebrity and the influence of digital technology.

My project which started with the bad girl stereotype as its central theme has developed and diverged considerably over three and half years, resulting in a major shift in investigation which has seen the idea of self-celebrity take a major role in recent work. Whilst aware of the phenomenon of self-celebrity through out my investigation it is only with hindsight that I see its central importance to my project and its connections with sexual self-expression and digital technology.

The opportunity for retrospection of my projects outcomes has allowed me to fully realize where my research has taken me, and points towards exciting new avenues for further development, building upon the knowledge I have gained concerning self-celebrity. Future projects include the investigation of the mobile phone camera and its utilization by women with regards to sexuality and further exploration of the Internet, in particular video pod casting.

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scanned from: *Frank Frazetta Book Four*, Peacock Press/Bantam Books, 1980

figure 4: Madonna in the 80s

sourced from: www.hilary.com/fashion/quickie-80sfashion.html

figure 5: Paris Hilton

sourced from: www.paris-hilton-sex.net/pitures/paris-hilton

figure 6: Jordon, photo essay

scanned from: *Womans Day*, June 21, 2004

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figure 8: bikini bandits website

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figure 9: *miss fire* 2002

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Part Two

- figure 21: Nat Finkelstein, *Andy films Nico*, Black and White photograph
scanned from: *The Factory Years 1964 – 1967*, Nat Finkelstein, London, Sidgwick & Jackson Limited, 1989
- figure 22: Andy Warhol, *The Marilyn Diptych*, 1962
Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas. Two panels, each 208.3 x 144.8 cm
scanned from: McShine, Kynaston, *Andy Warhol, A Retrospective*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p 215
- figure 23: Andy Warhol, *Untitled*, 1957
ball-point pen on paper, 42.5 x 35.6cm
scanned from: McShine, Kynaston, *Andy Warhol, A Retrospective*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p 115
- figure 24: Andy Warhol, *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'*, 1975
Silkscreen ink on paper and acetate collaged on paper; 10 works each 127 x 94cm

scanned from: McShine, Kynaston, *Andy Warhol, A Retrospective*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p 319

figure 25: Andy Warhol, *Maquettes For The Portfolio 'Mick Jagger'*, 1975
details as above in figure 24

figure 26: Allen Jones, *Gallery Gasper*, 1966-67
oil on canvas, 92 x 92cm
scanned from: Compton, Michael, *Pop Art*, England, The Hamlyn Publishing group, 1970, p 74

figure 27: images from Bizarre magazine
scanned from: *John Willie's Bizarre*, Germany, Taschen, 1996

figure 28: David LaChapelle, photograph, 2002
scanned from: *THE FACE*, free art zine with May issue, 2004, p 12

figure 29: Diane Arbus, *a naked man being a women*, 1968
black and white photograph
scanned from: *Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1972

figure 30: Nan Goldin, *Kana on the phone Tokyo*, 1994
scanned from: *Nan Goldin, I'll be your Mirror*, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992

figure 31: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Rachel Auburn and son*, 1995
scanned from: *Wolfgang Tillmans*, Phaidon, 2002

figure 32: Annie Sprinkle, *Anatomy of a Pin-up Photo*, 1997
Photo by Zorro, design by K. Gates
scanned from: Miglietti, F, *Extreme body*, Italy, Skira Editore S.p.A, 2003

figure 33: Kylie Minogue
scanned from: *Black and White*, October 2002

figure 34: Kayo Ume
photograph
scanned from: *REFLEX Contemporary Japanese Self-portraiture*, London, Trolley Limited, 2003

figure 35: Yuki Kumura
photograph
scanned from: *REFLEX Contemporary Japanese Self-portraiture*, London, Trolley Limited, 2003

- figure 36: Tracey Emin, *Good Smile Great Come*, 2000
pink neon
101 x 55 10cm
sourced from: www.whitecube.com
- figure 37: Sarah Lucas, *The Law*, 1997
C-type print, 123 x 99.5cm
scanned from: Collings, M, *Sarah Lucas*, London, Tate Publishing, 2002
- figure 38: Sarah Lucas, *Bitch*, 1995
Table, melons, t-shirt, vacuum-packed smoked fish
31.5 x 25 x 40cm
scanned from: Collings, M, *Sarah Lucas*, London, Tate Publishing, 2002
- figure 39: The Kingpins, performance still
scanned from: Pierce, Julianne, *Primavera 2003*, Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003
- figure 40: porno combo
website grab from: www.uzik.com/pornocombo
- figure 41: *Asian Dolls Society*, Shibari
scan of a web page print out
sourced from: www.uzik.com/pornocombo
- figure 42: Andres R Perez, *Bidet*
animation featured on pornocombo website
sourced from: www.uzik.com/pornocombo
- figure 43: La Fille Do
website grab from: www.lafilledo.com
- figure 44: La Fille Do
website grab from: www.lafilledo.com
- figure 45: digitalgirly.com
website grab from: www.digitalgirly.com
- figure 46: Natasha Merritt
Red Lips 13._TIFF
scanned from: *Digital Diaries*, Koln, Taschen, 2000
- figure 47: suicidegirls.com
website grab from: www.suicidegirls.com

figure 48: Amelie
website grab from: www.suicidegirls.com

figure 49: SuicideGirls undies
scanned from: SuicideGirls, Los Angeles, Feral House, 2004, p 120

figure 50: homegroangirls undies
website grab from: www.homegroangirls.com

Part Three

figure 51: *back up team* 2001
enamel on aluminium
90 x 60cm

figure 52: *insert to continue* 2001
enamel paint, mural paint and game console cord
size variable

figure 53: *art school ball* 2001
digital print
size variable

figure 54: *pit stop at mats place* 2001
digital print
size variable

Phase One

figure 55: trash team design
digital print
size variable

figure 56: *trash team racing* 2002
enamel on aluminium and wall
120 x 96cm

figure 57: *but sex is cooler* 2002
enamel on aluminium
100 x 74cm

figure 58: *double trouble* 2002
enamel on aluminium
120 x 90cm

figure 59: *miss fire* 2002
enamel on aluminium
120 x 90cm

figure 60: digital sketch 2002
digital print
size variable

figure 61: *bra flash* 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 62: *bum flash* 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 63: *hanging in town* 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 64: *boob flash for beer* 2003
digital print
size variable

Phase Two

figure 65: half and half (miss fire) digital sketch 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 66: half and half (miss fire) digital sketch 2003

figure 67: source photograph 2003
9 x 14cm

figure 68: half and half (double trouble) digital sketch
digital print
size variable

figure 69: half and half digital sketch 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 70: half and half digital sketch 2003
digital print
size variable

Phase Three

figure 71: night the cops turned up photo shoot

figure 72: dribble girl experiments, animation still, 2003

figure 73: dribble girl experiments, animation still, 2003

figure 74: *dribble girl in loungeroom*, DVD loop
still 2003

figure 75: *pop bandit* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
130 x 80cm

figure 76: dribble girl in kitchen digital sketches 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 77: dribble girl in kitchen digital sketches 2003
digital print
size variable

figure 78: *wired for sound* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
163 x 119cm

figure 79: *night cops turned up 2* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
141 x 119cm

figure 80: *night cops turned up 1* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 155cm

figure 81: installation shot, *everyday entertainment* November 2003
Gallery Wren, Sydney

figure 82: *tues night band practice 1* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 150cm

figure 83: *tues night band practice 2* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 150cm

- figure 84: *night cops turned up 3* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 164cm
- figure 85: installation shot of *Suburban Edge* March 2004
Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney
- figure 86: *Suburban Edge* opening night 2004
photograph by Bronwyn Wright
- figure 87: *coming home for that special dinner 1* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 160cm
- figure 88: *coming home for that special dinner 2* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 160cm
- figure 89: homegroan girls title page
web grab from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 90: house map page
web grab from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 91: band room web grabs
from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 92: lounge room web grabs
from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 93: relaxing after hard nights work web grab
from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 94: play fight still
from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 95: xmas hand cuffs web grab
from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 96: trashed morning cuppa still
web grab from www.homegroangirls.com
- figure 97: homegroan undies still
web grab from www.homegroangirls.com

figure 98: *Calender girl* 2005
12 digital prints
45 x 60cm each

figure 99: *2 dollar champagne night – aftermath* 2005
13 digital prints
80 x 60cm

figure 100: *relaxing after hard night work 1* 2005
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 180cm

figure 101: *relaxing after hard nights work 2* 2005
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 130cm

List of artworks in final submission

See Appendix 6

- 1) *pop bandit* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
130 x 80cm
- 2) *night cops turned up 1* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
141 x 119cm
- 3) *night cops turned up 2* 2003
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 155cm
- 4) *dribble girl in loungeroom* 2003
DVD loop
- 5) *tues night band practice 1* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 150cm
- 6) *tues night band practice 2* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 150cm
- 7) *night cops turned up 3* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 164cm
- 8) *coming home for that special dinner 1* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 160cm
- 9) *coming home for that special dinner 2* 2004
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 160cm
- 10) www.homegroangirls.com
- 11) *Calender girl* 2005
8 digital prints
45 x 60cm each

- 12) *2 dollar champagne night – aftermath* 2005
13 digital prints
80 x 60cm
- 14) *relaxing after hard night work 1* 2005
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 180cm
- 15) *relaxing after hard nights work 2* 2005
vinyl, polycarbonate sheet and digital print
120 x 130cm

Tiffany Winterbottom

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Education

- 2002- Master of Fine Art
Tasmanian School of Art (Hobart)
University of Tasmania
- 2000-01 Bachelor of Fine Arts (with Honours)
Tasmanian School of Art (Hobart)
University of Tasmania
- 1997-99 Bachelor of Fine Arts
Tasmanian School of Art (Hobart)
University of Tasmania
- 1988-91 Diploma of Fine Arts Paddington
Art School Sydney

Solo Exhibitions/ installations

- 2002 **Do you think you can handle this**
future elements Dance Party
(projection) Huon Quays Hobart
- 2001 **Insert to continue** Foyer Installation
gallery Hobart

Selected Group shows

- 2005 **The Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert**
Photography Award Gold Coast City Art
Gallery
- Rhapsody 21C: Tasmanian Contemporary**
Art Academy Gallery UTAS
- Suburban Edge** 24Hr Art Darwin and LaTrobe
Regional Gallery Victoria
- 2004 **Suburban Edge** Aust Centre for
Photography (ACP) Sydney
- [in]stall(s)** Long Gallery Salamanca
- Sticks and Stones** Academy gallery
Launceston
- US** Inflight gallery Hobart
- 2003 **everyday entertainment** Gallery Wren
Sydney
- everyday entertainment** CAST gallery
Hobart
- Brett Whitely Traveling Art**
Scholarship Finalist Exhibition
Brett Whitely Studio Sydney
- Wish you were here** Inflight gallery
North Hobart
- 2002 **ATM** Glen Eira City Council Gallery
Melbourne
- 2001 **Xbox finalist Exhibition** Gallery Wren
Sydney
- The CAST Post Graduate Award**
Fine Arts Gallery UTAS
- Somewhere between then and now**
CAST Gallery North Hobart
- City of Hobart Art Prize** Tasmanian
Museum and Gallery Hobart
- Accessorize** Fine Arts Gallery UTAS
- Shifting Axis** Dick Bett Gallery North
Hobart
- CAST members show** North Hobart
- Girl Toys** Fine Arts Gallery UTAS
- Red Hot and Blue** Salamanca Art
Centre Members Show Hobart

- 1999 **Brett Whitely Traveling Art**
Scholarship Finalist Exhibition
Sydney
- 1999 **Bibelot** Inka Inc Gallery Salamanca
Arts Centre Hobart
- Video Case Exhibition** Fine Arts
Gallery UTAS
- 1998 A Survey of Tasmanian Printmakers
The long Gallery Salamanca
- 1996 **Art Auction** Dick Betts Gallery Hobart

Professional activities

- 2002 Co-Curated *Play* for the Plimsoll
Gallery Tasmanian School of Art Hobart

Bibliography

- 2004 **Hill** Peter *All in a blur of Colour and*
Speed, the Sydney Morning Herald
April 9-11
- Foster** Alasdair *Suburban Edge*
ACP web catalogue
www.acp.au.com/suburban
- Watkins** Philip *everyday entertainment*
Photofile 70 summer 2004
- Klaosen** Diana *Imprints of seduction*
Real time Dec 03/Jan 04
- 2001 **Colless** Edward *Undiscovered*
Australian Art Collector Issue 16
- Transistor Student arts and culture*
festival Magazine UTAS
- Johnson** Kylie *Somewhere Between*
then and now CAST Gallery
- Andersch** Joerg *Insert to continue*
Hobart Mercury 3rd Oct
- Andersch** Joerg *Accessorize*
Hobart Mercury 3rd of Feb

Awards/ Grants / Residencies

- 2005 Finalist in 2005 Josephine Ulrick and
Win Schubert Photography Award
- 2004 Rosamond McCulloch Studio
Residency 2005 Paris
- Arts Bridge grant Arts Tasmania
- 2003 Finalist in the Brett Whitely Traveling
Art scholarship
- 2002 Graduate Research Support UTAS
- 2001 Finalist in the Xbox Game Art Prize
Awarded Judge commendation City of
Hobart Art Prize
- EDF Grant to curate an exhibition for
The Plimsoll Gallery UTAS
- Finalist in the Brett Whitely Traveling
Art scholarship
- 1999 Finalist in the Brett Whitely Traveling
Art scholarship

Associations

- 2003- Director of INFLIGHT ARS Hobart
- 1998-01 Administrator + founding member of
Inka Inc gallery Salamanca Hobart
- 2001- Australian network for Art and
Technology member
Contemporary Art Services
Tasmania (Cast) member